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RHYMES FROM ITALY.

RHYMES FROM ITALY,

IN

A SERIES OF LETTERS

TO

A FRIEND IN ENGLAND.

BY

M. VERTUE.

“ Ride, si sapis.”

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JAMES RIDGWAY & SONS, 169, PICCADILLY.

MDCCCXXXVII.

“ The Author has rhymed us a very good story, and not the less good because it is true, which, if his work do not immortalize, perhaps it may immortalize his work. * * * The lines are very pleasant reading, but we think that the Author must have found them still more pleasant writing.”—*Metropolitan Magazine*.

“ Much humour and shrewdness of observation, and a lively power of satire, qualified by good nature, will be found by the readers of ‘ The Rhymes from Italy.’ ”—*New Monthly Magazine*.

PR
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TO

JOHN FRANK NEWTON, Esq.

THE INGENIOUS AUTHOR

OF

“ THREE ENIGMAS EXPLAINED,”

&c. &c.

THE FOLLOWING WORK

IS INSCRIBED

BY ONE WHO HAS LONG ADMIRER HIS TALENTS,
AND VALUED HIS FRIENDSHIP.

765733



TO THE READER.

THE origin of the following letters was entirely accidental and unpremeditated. A friend having requested me to write to him during a tour in Italy, I was one day taken in a rhyming fit, and sent him a long sheet of doggrel, which he was pleased to say he admired, and importuned me to continue a description of my peregrinations in the same manner. Flattered by my friend's approbation—who, I must premise, is a man of considerable talents—I have made the attempt—how well I have succeeded

must be left to the judgment of the reader. I have aimed at little beyond putting into rhyme the usual desultory chit-chat of a familiar correspondence; and, whenever the subject would admit of it, without losing sight of the truth, giving the thing as comic a turn as possible.

There has been some very splendid descriptive poetry written on Italy—witness the too little that Lord Byron has left us—and there has been also a great deal of twaddling nonsense written on Italy, in the form of poetry, with pretensions, which I will not witness. I believe this is the first time it has ever been attempted in hudibrastic verse; so that the following letters will at least have the recommendation of novelty; and before the reader gets half through them—if his patience last so long—he will most

likely say, and say but too truly—novelty is their *only* recommendation. In justice to myself, however, I must add, that they have been written quite extempore; and I can truly affirm, that I never sat down to them one single hour, with the exception of the time employed in writing a fair copy. They have all been composed in walking about when I happened to be alone, or travelling in a diligence, or snail-paced vettura. I do not mention this circumstance as an excuse for my bad verses; for I am not quite certain that I could have done them much better with the greatest care and attention. Had these letters been intended for publication when they were written, I certainly should have preserved more order in the arrangement of the matter. Perhaps the reader may ask why they are *now* published?—I would explain, but for the fear of tiring

with a repetition of the hundred times told tale of the “solicitations of kind friends”—“imperfect parts of the work having got into circulation,” &c. &c. I see many parts that might have been improved; but, to use a sporting phrase, I am now “off the scent”—my mind is at present too much occupied with other pursuits, to permit me to enter on the task of correction.

Perhaps many of my readers may consider that I have exercised too much severity on some of the subjects which I have touched upon; but I must apprise them that I travelled at a time of life when all my ideas were too firmly set in an English mould to yield with much pliability to a foreign impression. At the same time I think it impossible to exaggerate many of the follies, vices, and monstrous superstitions that came under

my observation. Besides, my only object having been to amuse my correspondent, I endeavoured, with this view, to select materials from that side of the question which afforded me the greatest scope for bantering. My aim was, to excite a harmless laugh, and not at all to give offence, by ridiculing customs and subjects, respecting which I may happen to entertain an opinion different from that of others.

THE AUTHOR.

RHYMES FROM ITALY.

LETTER I.

Venice, 1835.

IN hunting for pictures, for statues, for music,
It oft has made me, and I'm sure must make *you* sick—
To think what snug comforts we all leave at home for it;—
And let it but only be fix'd in the minds of us,
That pleasure is spreading her lap in these climes for us ;
And quick, in a moment, away we all roam for it.
But hold—this prancing steed will not
Go either in a walk, or trot ;
But starts in lines so very long—
In truth, they ne'er will suit my song.
So, I must look about to find
A beast more suited to my mind :
I hate such high-flown, bounding paces,
Just only fit for Epsom races.

In short, it wants such skill to ride 'em—
Such genius, taste, and wit to guide 'em—
Such strength and vigour, let me tell ye,
Demands a Byron, Moore, or Shelley.
No Pegasus I wish—my job
Asks but a little punchy cob ;
A quiet, gentle, hobbling creature,
Just suited to an eight feet metre.

Methinks I hear you say, “ enough
“ Of this dull introduct'ry stuff ;”—
Well—if you judge that I had better
Commence at once my promised letter ;
Here goes—and if you see the end on 't,
Some patience you'll require, depend on 't.

But let me say, ere I begin,
I don't intend to enter in
Minute particulars—or trace
Each turnpike road, or resting place ;
Or, ev'ry palace that I see,
Or picture, bust, or statuary.
If, on such things, you're in the dark,
You'll find them all in MISTRESS STARKE.

All hail ! dear Venice, hail to thee,
Thou darling play-thing of the sea.
What, tho' the tyrant's chain has bound thee,
And thrown his chilly grasp around thee ;—

Yet joy sits smiling on the face
Of many of thy sun-burnt race*.
Not so thy nobles—gloom and care,
Alas! too plain, are pictured there.
Their present grief may well deplore
The want of courage heretofore;—
Heroic deeds might then have gain'd
Much more than grieving e'er obtain'd.
Their gorgeous palaces soon must
Crumble into mouldering dust;
Or slowly sink beneath the wave,
That loves the marble shaft to lave—
Those wonders of a former day,
Now, splendid beauties in decay.

The mocking echo, now, no more
Fainter repeats from shore to shore
Sweet Tasso's strains⁽¹⁾—they're lost and gone,
And mute the gondoliere's song.
The ripple of the sparkling tide,
That murmurs 'gainst his vessel's side;
Or caution's word, or friendly greeting,
Of toiling man, a brother meeting⁽²⁾;

* “ Their liveliness, their affability, and that happy indifference which constitution alone can give (for philosophy aspires to it in vain) have not sunk under circumstances.”—*Lord Byron*.

Save these, 'tis rare of sounds you hear,
That break upon the list'ning ear.
Not so of yore—the jocund song
Resounded then in strains along,
From boat to boat, from side to side,
Soft trembling on the crystal tide,
Join'd by each distant gondolier,
Not too remote the theme to hear;
Which, in the next responding strain,
Was gaily bounded back again.
Will that strain rise once more?—O! never—
With liberty, 'tis lost for ever.
The lark springs soaring from his nest,
The ambient air cleaves with his breast;
In freedom, spreads his speckled wings,
And flutt'ring, up to “Heaven's-gate sings;”—
Confine him in a cage, his song
Is mute—his native spirit gone.

“ If you would view St. Mark's aright,”
Just enter, as the sun's last light
Upon the stately dome is seen
A glowing, ling'ring, parting gleam—
'Tis then her mystic form appears,
A half-lost dream of by-gone years.
A something, that partakes of all—
A Christian church—a Druid's hall—

A Jewish temple, or Egyptian—
A building that defies description :
And, to be well appreciated,
It must be seen, or underrated.

The works of art, i' the new Museum,
I'm sure you 'd like, if you could see 'em ;
Perhaps you 'll say, I ought to mention
Those most deserving of attention.
Well—first, it's proper you should know,
Before upon the task I go ;
I cannot breathe my soul in lyrics,
Or burst a vein, in strong hysterics ;
Or fall in either fits, or fainting,
At any oil or fresco painting.
Some wild enthusiasts for the art,
Swear roundly that I have no heart ;—
So I must be content to rest with
One half sense less than they are bless'd with.
But, faith, they make a great omission,
'To say, I don't admire 'Titian.
Soft Carlo Dolce keeps me hours—
Nor are the strength, and force and powers
Of Raphael, pass'd with inattention—
So much I feel his fine invention :
And no enthusiast can match me,
In pleasure, at a true Caracci :
The soft, harmonious, glowing Claude,
I can appreciate and laud.

At Canaletti's views of Venice,
To tell my joy, too weak my pen is ;
Old Teniers makes me laugh out right
With pleasure, and with true delight ;
In age, in straggling hairs and wrinkles,
Old Denner's pencil ⁽³⁾ the true link tells,
That separates the imaged features
From nature's animated creatures ;
As if there was contending strife
Between the picture and the life ;
Each line he draws with such acuteness,
Such accuracy and minuteness.
My sentiments you hardly need know
About the Heaven-inspired Guido ;
As, on his works, there is but one
Just critical opinion,
Which, in six words is clearly shown,
" Perfection marks them for her own."
Now, if for such as these, they deem
That I am wanting in esteem ;
I tell them this, whate'er their wonder,
They make a most confounded blunder.
But yet I cannot join the rout
That some good people make about
What, after all, I can't descry
They know much more about than I.
Say what they will, I'll keep from fits :
Nor render up the little wits

With which I've been so kindly bless'd ;
Few tho' they be, it's quite confess'd.

They seem to have a festa here,
For ev'ry day in ev'ry year ;
And one would be inclined to say,
Each *workday* was a *holiday*.
Their very names would fill a letter,
And, to describe them any better,
And make you all the customs know,
Require a duodecimo ;
Indeed, in ev'ry shop is seen
A larger work upon this theme ⁽⁴⁾ ;
Perhaps, the following example
May be of service for a sample.

To keep the parish out of evil,
And from the clutches of the devil,
Each has a saint ; or, what's no less,
A kind, protecting, good saintess ;—
Indeed, the females, it would seem,
As guardians, are in great esteem ;
And folks that live, are most content
Under petticoat government ;
A certain proof, beyond all doubt,
These people know what they're about :
For, if their senses must be hidden,
And they are forced to be saint-ridden,

Their choice a judgment sound denotes,
In fixing on the petticoats.
These ladies so monopolize
Our minds, with all their witcheries—
And ev'ry thought so lead astray
From what one ought to do and say,
That I have nearly lost the thread
Of what I purposed to have said :
So, let me turn a few steps back,
And try to find again my track.
Well—now, as I was going to write,
On this saint's or saintess's night ;
The men are wash'd, and shaved, and dress'd
Most smartly out, in all their best.
The women, hoping saintly succours,
Are seen in their “ best bibs and tuckers.”
From ev'ry window you may see
Some pictures, scarfs, or tapestry—
Or wreaths of blooming flowers, which may
Adorn the happy, joyous day.
And dazzling bright illuminations
Add lustre to these demonstrations.
Then, in some vacant place, a stand
Erected high, to hold a band ;
Who lend their aid, by soothing airs,
To make the folks forget their cares—
And parties who, from ev'ry floor,
Are sipping coffee at the door :

Or, strolling up and down, among
The happy, careless, laughing throng—
Unconscious quite, how quick time flies,
'Midst shining lamps, and sparkling eyes.
Now, there is little more to say
About a Venice festive day.
I've been among them, it is right
To tell, both morning, noon, and night ;
And never saw the scene give birth
To aught, but innocence and mirth—
And often blush'd, to think on some
Results, so different at home—
But *fruit* and *coffee* keep heads quiet,
While *gin* and *porter* breed a riot.

I've often thought, and thought again,
With much less pleasure than with pain—
And tried the thing in ev'ry sense.
To find out, what real influence
This trav'ling mania, now so common,
May have upon our English women—
If it the least improves their lives ;
Or makes them sweeter, kinder wives—
Or if by opening thus our purses,
They better mothers make, or nurses—
Or if it gives their minds a bent
To happiness, and true content.
Now, if upon these subjects grave,
My real judgment you would have,

You'll recollect, it must be noted,
I cannot on this theme be quoted:
For, if the girls my mind should spy out,
In anger they might scratch an eye out—
Or from my head pull out some hair;
And, truth to say, I've none to spare.
Then let us keep the subject mum—
For could I think 'twould ever come
To any dear young lady's ears,
'Twould quite distract each thought with fears:
And, beyond measure, griev'd should be,
To have e'en *one* an enemy.
So, let us try to cheat their keenness,
And keep the matter snug between us.
Had I to choose a sweet, young wife,
To love, and cherish, all my life—
Give me the female, fond of home—
Domestic—and who hates to roam—
Pleased, with her family, to share
Her husband's love, and tender care.
Whene'er I ask, I always learn
That travelling gives a vagrant turn
To women's minds—and what's the use?
It makes them grumble like the deuce—
And scold their children while they've breath,
And henpeck all the men to death.
If I must freely speak my mind,
I doubt, if parents ever find

That statue-rooms, in any sense,
Improve their children's innocence (⁵).
On things, why should we lay such stress,
Our females blush at to express?
Remember, when that blush is flown,
The greatest charm of woman's gone.
Nor has dame Nature, from her store
Of gifts to man, bestow'd one more
Of worth, his cares to recompense,
Than blushing female innocence.
The nectarine's lovely bloom is such,
If not despoil'd by man's rude touch;
The dew, before the sun can sip
Its sweets from off the violet's lip;
The pollen too in flower-bells, ere
The busy bee has rifled there;
The sparkling drops, that hang at morn,
Bright, trembling on the blooming thorn:
That glisten to the op'ning day,
'Till kiss'd by wanton winds away;
And picture well we may, from hence,
Young, virtuous, female innocence.
Now let them, for the time to come,
Keep that, and stay content at home.

He's not our friend, who from us smothers
This practice of our great grandmothers.

We read, Ulysses went to roam,
But left his patient wife at home,
To weave his shirts, and scold each maid
That idle was—so Homer said ;
Who doubtless knew much more than we
Of that old dame Penelope.

The ancients always thought it right,
Whene'er they went from home to fight,
Or take a trip to foreign soils,
To mitigate their cares and toils—
On such occasions you will find them
Leave wives and daughters all behind them,
Who seem'd content at home to sit,
To card, and spin, and weave, and knit—
Nor do we read they left their tasks
For parties, cards, quadrilles, or masks.
How it would make a modern Miss laugh,
To put into her hand a distaff !
How she would stare at, and abuse it—
At any rate, she'd never use it ;
And ten to one, if truth be said,
She 'd throw the distaff at your head.
But Grecian ladies, Homer says,
Had more industrious, patient ways,
And never sigh'd for change, or prancing
About the world, or dress, or dancing.

This touch at ancient times long flown,
Has made me quite forget my own ;
And something else I meant to add—
Now, hang it all—this is too bad—
I've quite forgot each word and line—
Although I know 'twas very fine—
So give me credit for intent
To bring another argument
In favour of the good old ways
Of grandmanmas, and former days.

Here splendid churches—princely villas
Are tow'ring high above the billows.
But for the streets—where'er you sally,
You'll find them just like Cranbourn Alley :
Indeed, but few streets are more spacious,
And very many less capacious—
Nor was that labyrinth, for us,
About which authors make such fuss—
I mean fair Rosamond's, oft writ on,
By any means so hard to hit on,
As these, which (if I'm not mistaken)
Would e'en have puzzled Friar Bacon.
Perhaps this is the very reason,
We find, at every time and season,
'The pleasures of St. Mark's arcades
Present a charm that never fades.

These scenes a varied joy unfold,
Felt far more easily than told ;
Which makes me cautious to assail, what
I am so pretty sure to fail at.
Talk of your promenade and park—
Give me *Piazza di St. Mark*.
So, I shall nothing further say,
Than, should you chance to come this way,
Just take an ice, and seat, before
The best of *caffées*, Florian's door :
But, if the scene should fail to charm you,
I know no other that can warm you.
So, pray remain among your evils ;
Keep snug at home, and nurse *blue-devils* :
And as I think this *lengthy* letter
Will no way tend to make you better—
For I have heard that too much prosing
Is sure to set a patient dozing—
And dozing, all the doctors choose
To think, promotes these doleful *blues*.
So I'll conclude, with wishes fervent,
From your sincere, and faithful servant.

LETTER II.

Milan, 1835.

A JOURNEY here is not a light one,
Like running down from town to Brighton :
But many troubles you must buffet,
And if by Vetturino, *rough it*.
Mine, to this place, I must declare,
Was quite a tiresome affair :
The roads were bad, our springs so-so,
And I was bruised from top to toe ;
All, save one part, thanks to my bag*,
Which carried me like any nag ;
Or that part, too, without a jest,
Had been as sore as all the rest.
The drivers pay (for such the course is)
Both for *your* dinner, and the *horse's* :
And truth compels me to declare,
It is but very sorry fare.

* An air-bag.

But if the items you would hear
Of this said Vetturino's cheer,
List, for a moment, to my verse,
While I the bill of fare rehearse.

Soup, made of grease and dirty bread,
Is first placed at the table's head ;
Then comes, of course, to follow rule,
Some dry boiled beef, or ass, or mule—
For faith, I never could discover,
Whether it was the one or other.
A fritto next (forgive such speeches)
As tough as fried old leather breeches.
The moment that the whip drives up
To where we either dine or sup,
You hear the noise, the screams, the din
Of chickens, as you enter in—
(A horrid, frightful, dread alarum,
In jealous chanticleer's snug haram)—
Their bones are soon before your eyes—
For flesh, they have none on their thighs.
Now, if you'll only add to these,
Sour wine, stale bread, and goats'-milk cheese.
You'll have (or I'm a lying sinner)
A real Vetturino's dinner.

A fellow, at whose house we stopt,
And who, before, had never dropt

A civil word, or even look,
Presented me his stranger's-book*;
And ask'd a line of commendation,
Which just might speak my approbation :
And so I wrote—and bad they be,
The following extempore.

I smile, whene'er I chance to look
In what is called the stranger's-book—
 So full of praise and commendations—
Such “ kind attention—civil waiters”—
Such “ humble folks”—not saucy praters,
 But suited to their situations.

Could these commenders but procure
A corner in some lone voiture—
 Instead of posting at their ease ;
I'd lay a bet, they 'd quickly spy
Themselves as badly off as I,
 Whom waiters have no wish to please.

But what a fool am I, to chatter
On such a plain and simple matter ;

* At the inns in Italy, they keep a book, in which you are requested to enter your name ; and they are always more anxious to win your praise by solicitations, than by good accommodations and moderate charges. If you do not make a bargain for every article, nine times in ten you are imposed upon.

Which is the same, I much suspect,
In ev'ry place that I could mention—
Wealth meets with very great attention,
And poverty with cold neglect.

Milan's fair city looks by far
More like a place prepar'd for war—
For deeds of slaughter, blood, and strife—
'Those cursed ills of human life ;
'Than one, where peace and arts combin'd,
'T' instruct and humanize mankind.
But so it is—old Metternich
Has play'd them such a cunning trick—
Has got their freedom, in exchange
For hussars, barracks, guns, and chains.
Where'er one turns, where'er one bies,
Muskets and whiskers meet the eyes.
Both drums and trumpets here assail ye,
And all the grim paraphernalia
Of fifteen thousand German soldiers,
Who look so fiercely to beholders,
You'd swear the French had never beat them,
Or ever would, if they should meet them.

A strict regard to truth demands
That I should say, the Austrian band's
Attractive military music,
(A very sly, but not a new trick)

Play to the folks most soothing strains—
A pleasing salvo for their chains.
So trav'ling fellows bind a bruin,
Close both his eyes, and then pipe to him ;
Make him promote, in ev'ry sense,
Their int'rests and convenience.
I hate the German politics—
I hate all crafty Metternichs—
I hate the chain that tyrants bind
Upon the freedom of mankind :
And love with all my heart, no less,
What adds unto men's happiness (6).

The under story is a new one,
And, depend upon 't, a true one.

The winter past was more severe
Than had been known for many a year ;
And when the crystal ice was strong,
On water in the garrison,
The townsmen, without long debating,
Petition'd for a little skating.
The commandant, at his own pleasure,
Had then no power to grant the measure :
But he would write for what was wanted,
Which he was sure would soon be granted.
Well ! did he get the wish'd permission
From that grave, aulic, slow commission ?

Aye ! sure he did.—But when ?—reply !
Why—*in the middle of July !*

Indeed, I still have better jokes
Of these tyrannical proud folks ;
But as the post don't always deal
With honour, but oft breaks a seal—
I think I'd better not prolong
This theme, but rather hold my tongue ;
Or I, perhaps, may chance to go
To where they sent poor Pellico ;
Whose punishment, a stain will cast
On Austria, while her annals last.

Before the Christian year began,
Seven wonders were perform'd by man ;
And if there be, as I've heard say,
Seven wonders of the present day—
Milan's fair duomo must, no doubt,
Assist to make the number out.
Her snow-white pinnacles on high,
Bright, glist'ning in a cloudless sky ;
And twice two thousand statues grace
Or turret's top, or vacant place—
Saints, from ev'ry christian nation,
A perfect marble population.
Great must have been th' expanded mind,
'That first a work like this design'd ;

And great the faith and zeal of those
That brought it to a final close.

Whichever way you turn, you find
Traces of Bonaparte's mind—
Works of utility, or art,
Are visible in ev'ry part :
And Milan shows, down to this hour,
The signs of his protecting power ;
From the triumphal arch of peace,
To Semplon's rocky precipice.

Italians use, in conversation,
More action and vociferation—
At least, than I have heard and seen
In any country where I've been.
Observe two men, who chance to meet
Just at the corner of a street—
It matters not, in any way,
What subject 'tis, or what they say—
It may be weather—or be news—
Or, heel-piecing a pair of shoes—
Or, such a shop sells wretched stuff—
Or, here's the best cigars and snuff.
You'd think, from each gesticulation,
The plague had broke out in the nation ;
Or, that there very soon would be
A universal bankruptcy ;

Or, that some dreadful, horrid case
Had just that moment taken place :
The back up—like, I know not what,
Unless it be an angry cat—
The shoulders to the ears—and their
Arms high extended in the air—
Bawling louder than did ever
Oyster-women, in cold weather ;
Just bring to mind the antic pranks
Of some itin'rant mountebanks ;
Or, see an auctioneer implore,
To get from you one bidding more :
Or, Punch, in his contending strife
With doctor, devil, and his wife.
If these you've heard and seen, I fain
Would bring them to your mind again,
To picture how these people greet
Each other, when they chance to meet :
Nor is the subject now related,
The least burlesqued, or overrated ;
Or, any similes so fit
This strange extravagance to hit,
And sketch it, in its colours bright,
As those I've brought before your sight.

The op'ra-house, be it confess'd,
Is, next to one, the very best
I ever saw—the company
Have voices good enough for me.

Our countrymen, who always crave
For better things than they can have :
Protest to me, the whole performance
Is nothing but a farce and romance.
They must have Pasta, Tamburini,—
Or, Grisi, Toldi, Pellegrini,
Ivanoff, Lablache, Zucchelli,
Dupree, Ronconi, or Donzelli ;—
If they 've not these, or Malibran,
Let others do the best they can
To please, the race of Mister Bull
Will vote the thing a *bore*, or dull.
In short, you 'd smile to hear them chatter
Their little wit, about this matter.
How much better their opinions
On a roasted goose and onions :
With me, their thoughts more cogent are
About a dinner bill of fare ;
For music, nine in ten so botch it,
(Scarce know a quaver from a crotchet),
That I can hardly hear them mention
The subject with a grave attention.

What strange events upon the earth
The teeming womb of Time brings forth ;
And what to-day we oft see done,
Was yesterday ne'er thought upon.

See Science, Education's child,
In plain attire and aspect mild ;
Still pressing onward, to attain
The recompence of toil and pain :
Nor will she stop her eager flight
'Till she has reach'd the summit's height ;
And man from thence will learn to know
A balm for many an earthly woe.
The wave is rolling with such force,
No prejudice can check its course :
It's risen high in our blest state,
And *here* begins to undulate ;
Nor gaols, nor chains, nor tyrant's frown,
Will long prevail to keep it down ;
And worth and talent, we shall see
Emerge from their obscurity.

Pride will not now consent to know
What such a man may be, but *who*.
He may be honest, wise, and frank,
But what is that, if he wants rank ?
Nor will his virtues, or his sense,
Screen him from pride and insolence.
His learning seldom is of use,
Nay oft indeed it's an abuse ;
And worthless quite all human knowledge,
That was not got within a college ;

And men are often estimated
But from the place where educated ;
They must be ignorant, or fools,
If from the democratic schools.
Pride only weighs the human head
According to the place 'twas bred.
But such distinctions soon must fail,
And worth alone at last prevail :
Nor man depend upon the nod
Of power, but on the will of God :
Nor Protestant nor Papist gain
Consideration for a name,
Or, by what faith he follows here,
Provided that his faith's sincere :
Or, by what name he's placed before ye,
Or, whether it be Whig or Tory (⁷).

Mind presses onward still in spite
Of ev'ry clog to stop its flight ;
Or in a cot or palace bred,
By one fix'd rule 'twill not be led.
Aspiring thought you cannot bind,
Or mark a limit for the mind (⁸).
Time's treading down, each fleeting hour,
Usurp'd and arbitrary pow'r ;
And no distinctions upon earth
Will long be cherish'd, wanting worth.

The power of Austria may confine
The wings of freedom for a time ;
But neither tyranny, nor might,
Will in the end impede her flight,
Till this, and distant lands from hence,
Feel all her warmth and influence.

What pride by wisdom can't obtain,
It tries by folly oft to gain—
Adopts strange customs at expense
Of reason and of common sense ;
And makes imaginary troubles
Out of mere childish airy bubbles.
So weak and frivolous have some
On unimportant things become,
That they will often, wanting sense,
Assume a foolish consequence
About such trifles as the spelling
Of some old castle, name, or dwelling.
I've seen a man in great distress,
Not finding *e* in his address ;
Another once was called to fight
Because he had forgot to write,
In spelling of a name, a *y*,
And lost his life for using *i*.
One must have somewhat to beguile
Our earthly cares, and make us smile,

And looking on a baby play
Is just as good as any way,
To set the weary mind a laughing
At objects much too light for scoffing.
Then pride, in dread of all intrusion,
Has hit on systems of exclusion :
Societies and clubs are spread ⁽⁹⁾,
Where only *rank* can show its head ;
Or those professions which they call
Honourable and liberal.

Officers of land and sea,
Law, physic, and divinity ;
The first are privileged because,
Obedient to the country's laws,
They lead out men for pay and food,
To shed a fellow creature's blood—
But cutting throats is just and true,
When men are dress'd in red or blue.
God sends on earth " peace and good-will ;"
Man hires himself to wound and kill.
The wretch that murders only one,
You shudder quite to look upon ;
The hero makes a thousand bleed,
You praise—nay oft reward the deed.
Fine names we've got for his abuse ;
Heav'n will, I hope, admit th' excuse ⁽¹⁰⁾.

There 's no society, I ween,
In which you've not the next class seen ;
I mean such as will take a fee,
And plead for either you or me :
Who will for gain give up belief
In ev'ry thing but just their brief ;
And strict morality defy,
By often stating truth 's a lie :
And what they know a lie to be,
Declaring plain veracity.
Men, who will make at any season
“ The worse appear the better reason.”
Our laws have got so complicated,
The strangest things are tolerated ;
And whether black be white or no,
Requires some wit and skill to show—
At any rate a “ learned brother”
Can prove it either one or th' other.

And men are liberal, they urge,
Who know to blister, bleed, and purge ;
Who've learnt the certain power of physic,
In curing gout, catarrh, and phthisic—
Have tolerance to mix with those
They cup, phlebotomize, and dose.
He should have countenance whose pains
Have taught him just how many grains

Of calomel will balance quite
The gorging of a former night.
Will man ne'er learn that temperance
Would save both physic and expense?

Of course the clergy you find there,
Whose rank admits them ev'ry where.
But others, under no pretence
Can ever meet with tolerance;
For no acquirement is held good,
If unallied to wealth and blood.
Plebeians must content alone
Remain, and read the news at home;
Or find amusement for their lives
Among their children and their wives:
And even rank, if they 'd begin it,
Would see, I'm sure, much pleasure in it.
You 'd think the great had form'd a plan
To make a link 'tween God and man;
And, as they could not reach the one,
The other not to look upon.
And, if you 'd deem me not facetious,
I'd say, to form another species;
I do not mean a *tertian* sex,
Since that the great might justly vex:
For styling them nor man, nor woman,
Would be to deem their class not human.

Such wrath and jealousy you trace
Against the whole plebeian race.
What a misfortune that sound sense
Is not tack'd to inheritance ;
'Then aristocracy some good
Might chance to give us with the blood ;
For titles *only* never can
A patriot form, or useful man !

I place not rank before your eyes,
Either to mock it, or despise :
With *merit* join'd, my humble lays
Will never cease to sing its praise ;
Or whip it to the full extent,
When wicked, proud, and insolent.

In Lombardy it makes one sick,
To see how cunning Metternich
Humbugs the people with pretence,
To rob them of their health and pence.
His master, ev'ry one maintains,
Has much good temper—not much brains—
He has a bow and smile for all
His subjects, high, low, great, and small :
He says he loves them (mum—their pelf)
Much better than he loves himself—
Which fact the world can plainly see
In his august monopoly

Upon tobacco; which, no doubt,
He knows they cannot do without :
And suffers an adulteration
(That merits little approbation)
To be compounded with the stuff,
Which of itself is bad enough ;
But join'd with sulphur it must be
Injurious in a high degree :
Yet here it's very hard to find
An ounce that is not so combined—
But kings think nought of subjects' health
When kings have need of subjects' wealth ;
And sulphur mix'd up with the weed,
Helps to relieve the country's need ;
For then tobacco of the north,
Sells just for double what it's worth.
His subjects' health would quickly tell it,
If without brimstone he would sell it :
But health's of little estimate
In exigencies of a state—
So crooked, bad, and cumbersome
Has human policy become.
The strength and morals of a nation
Are ev'ry moment in temptation ;
And mankind are in daily strife,
To guard them safe, and pure through life.

But why waste words your mind to gain
Upon a subject that's so plain?
No thinking man can wish made out
A thing on which he has no doubt:
And facts show, to our clear conviction,
Such is the truth past contradiction:
That oft state burdens are far worse
For mind and body, than for purse;
And operate, we must confess,
But little to man's happiness.

In all departments here you see
Deception, guile, and trickery—
I grant the craft is old, and traces
Are *often* found in *other* places.
In one or two things I could tell,
The artists here the world excel.
In cunning priest-trade you will find
All other nations far behind.
Some strong and powerful facts we see,
In reading ancient history:
And which, having no exceptions,
Deeper fall on our perceptions—
As ever since the world began,
Sly man has been deceiving man;
And under some conceal'd pretence,
Stealing his freedom, and his pence—

Nay, life itself has not been free
From this detested tyranny.

The strong man early learnt to seek
Subsistence from the poor and weak ;
And craft and cunning soon to smother
Affection for a simple brother—
Nor is there, at this present hour,
Either of grandeur, wealth, or power,
That can a better title name
To what they hold, or what they claim.

The heathen priests we early find
Gulling with humbug half mankind :
Deceiving them with tales of wonder,
Invented but to cheat and plunder :
And under diff'rent shades of power,
The thing is practised to this hour.
And while the crafty, and the sly,
Can live at ease, and wants supply,
Just by imposing upon these
Who swallow any tale they please,
The world will ne'er want crafty men
To plunder and bamboozle them.

Perhaps you may not quite approve
The word "*humbug*" I've used above—

I had myself some thoughts contrary,
And look'd all o'er the Dictionary,
But could in no page ever hit
Upon a word I thought so fit
To picture the idea true
That in my mind I had in view—
So I must let it pass, and venture
To hope it will escape your censure.

LETTER III.

Florence, 1835.

I NEVER knew a two days' ride
So tiresome, and hard to bide,
As from Bologna unto Florence—
And when the day arrives to go hence,
I'll try to take another route,
If such a thing can be found out.
And then the inn you stop to rest at—
Which in truth 's the very best that
Road affords—but such a dwelling!
Its wretchedness is past all telling.
'Tis meanness all—save your account,
Which these sad rogues make to amount
To something like the sum at least,
'They'd charge you at a city feast.

The lines that follow from a door
In this hotel will tell you more
Than I can do in half a page,
So their assistance I'll engage:
'Twill save me trouble and the time
I take to find out ev'ry rhyme.

“ Perhaps some trav'ler will inform us
The charge at this house is enormous—
Indeed for bed and board I say 'tis:
But then in justice I must note,
The lots of dirt cramm'd down your throat,
The cook and landlord give you, gratis.

“ It's quite correct as I have said, for
Every trifle must be paid for,
Except the filth, and bugs, and fleas—
Or any other such like article,
For which they never charge a particle—
The gen'rous souls—they give you these.”

And likewise in another place,
Upon a wall these lines I trace:—

“ If crawling bugs, and hopping fleas,
And peradventure *more* than these;—
If buzzing, humming, dread muskitoes,
Those horrid, sly, blood-sucking sleep-foes—

I say if some few charms like these,
Have any chance thy taste to please—
Trav'ller, thank thy stars that sent thee
To this hotel where there are plenty.”

For pictures Florence yields to none ;
Nor eke for statues but to Rome :
Though there are amateurs and many,
Who say it's not surpass'd by any.
Be this allow'd or be it not,
It never ought to be forgot,
The Medicean Venus here,
Has been the *toast* for many a year ;—
I mean with learned connoisseurs
Who love to pass their vacant hours
'Mongst figures made of stone and wood,
Rather than those of flesh and blood ;
But as I happen still to prize
A pair of moving, sparkling eyes,
I'm wanting in that erudition
Required for this competition.
With all respect for that great genius
Who form'd the splendid Grecian Venus ;
I think Canova's for invention*,
Merits still our close attention.

* A beautiful statue of Venus, by Canova, which stands in the Grand Duchess's dressing-room, in the Palazzo Pitti.

Of sex she has a consciousness,
Much more than I can well express ;
A modesty of air and mien,
To be admired needs but be seen ;
A timid, sweet, incentive thing,
That blushes at the zephyr's wing
She feels is undulating round her,
And with its balmy breath has bound her.
The dancing fawn good Mister Bell*
(Who knows about such things quite well)
Says, in proportions anatomical,
That this old ugly figure comical
Surpasses all that Time has left us,
Or all of which he has bereft us.
For my part I've not seen a satyr,
And so know little of the matter ;
I hate all heads with horny bumps,
And men with goats' tails on their rumps.

Here there is more than one museum,
And truly I oft go to see 'em :
They are the lions of the town,
And justly merit their renown.
Stuff'd savage beasts that quite affright you—
They look as if they meant to bite you.

* Mr. Bell, the surgeon of Edinburgh, published two volumes of letters on Italy, in which he speaks, in the highest terms of approbation, of the anatomical beauties of this figure.

Cramm'd fowls of ev'ry kind and feather,
Arranged—each genus put together.
In short here's ev'ry thing one wishes,
Large pickled snakes, inflated fishes—
Insects preserved, gumm'd butterflies,
That both astonish and surprise.
In fact there seems just ev'ry creature,
That ever has been formed by Nature.
Hopping, flying, leaping, grinning,
Running, crawling, creeping, swimming;
And other nasty-looking things—
With fins, scales, claws, or feet, and wings—
Which are, an auction-bill to quote,
“ By far too numerous to note.”

We here in various rooms may see
Queer subjects in anatomy;
Prepar'd with skill, in wax and gum,
And very much admired by some,
Who understand man in detail—
A subject upon which I fail;
Nor is there any likely chance
I e'er shall clear my ignorance;
Because I have no predilection
For either med'cine, or dissection.
I grant it's useful to mankind—
The study does not suit my mind.

But as I was about to say,
Where'er you turn, whichever way,
You've heads and shoulders, legs and thighs,
In pieces cut before your eyes—
No tempting sight for leisure hours,
Save to your ardent connoisseurs—
And yet I beg you'll understand,
I love a lady's pretty hand ;
But being tack'd I think no harm,
Unto a perfect trunk and arm.
A lady's well-turned foot—pray note—
At bo-peep from a petticoat,
Is more attractive far to me,
Than when it's cut off by the knee.
In short I am not one of these
That mutilated bodies please :
My prejudice has always run
Upon a perfect living one.

Here are some objects in the town,
Besides, most worthy of renown.
Perhaps there's no place where one meets
So many treasures in the streets ;
For busts and statues—works of art—
Are strew'd about in ev'ry part.
Of amateurs the great delight
Is Angelo's famed group of " Night ;"

Which in Lorenzo's church we all
Can see by giving but a *paul*.
It is a work of fire and spirit,
Of bold design, and striking merit :
Unfinished—yet enough we find
To prove the author's splendid mind :
In fine contrivance, most romantic ;
In execution, quite gigantic.
It's said no modern artist can
Be found to finish Michael's plan.—
I grant his style is hard to follow ;
Yet harder still this tale to swallow.
But ere I leave this building quite,
It is perhaps no more than right
To say a word before I go,
About that noted rary-show—
The chapel, where they put to bed
The poor old dukes when they are dead ;
The cost of which the living may
Find rather burdensome to pay.
But toiling man has not the skill
To change a reigning monarch's will ;
And grievous imposts are his doom
To build a palace or a tomb.
What's finish'd in this fav'rite spot—
(And very much of it is not,

Or ever will be I'll engage,
In this or any other age—
Not that the reigning Duke can curse
Dame Fortune for an empty purse :
But reigning dukes, and reigning kings,
And such revered and sacred things,
Would rather spend, it's oft been shown,
Their subjects' money than their own.)
In rich materials all that see 'em,
Confess those in this mausoleum,
In value cannot be exceeded
By any thing that has preceded.
But yet admitting all this true,
If I have ta'en a proper view
Of this affair—it's my belief,
If finish'd it would want relief.
These gems and marbles, I suspect,
Will never have that fine effect
We view at Venice in the Scalzi,
(In which I never could a fault see,)
Or Saint Martino on the hill
At Naples, that's more perfect still.

I never could make up my mind,
Or quite a cogent reason find,
Why here one very rarely meets
The least good music in the streets.

And yet we ev'ry moment call
Th' Italian people musical.
Now if for such a thing there be,
As national partiality—
(And I can neither wholly doubt it
Nor quite make up my mind about it,)
One would expect to find some traces
In streets and lanes, or public places ;
But almost ev'ry note I hear
Grates, more than satisfies, the ear.
Perhaps the humble artists share
More money when they go elsewhere ;
For here are far too many schools,
Where they teach music and the rules,
To want a bountiful supply
Of artists, who are forced to sigh
At humble distance from the spot
To which the inspired few have got.

Academies for music making,
Are all the rage, and very taking—
The *big-wigs* talk upon this theme,
Until they're in a perfect dream—
They'll one day see, though now they're dark,
That *Nature only* gives the spark ;
And she, and she alone imparts,
What makes your Handels, and Mozarts.

I know Academies Royal can
Teach ev'ry rule that's known to man—
But all the schemes by man e'er woven,
Will make no Bishop, nor Beethoven—
For such but Nature has the mould
The mind to form, and to unfold.

All rules of the poetic art,
May soon be taught, and got by heart.
You may teach that "academy,"
Will rhyme well with "how sad it be"—
But teach such things till them you tire on,
You'll never make a Pope, or Byron.
The rule in music I would fain
Think as conclusive, and as plain.
And, certainly, we want no college
For practically gaining knowledge.
A horse's tail may be drawn pat
Against the bowels of a cat—
And well the first with rosin spatter,
Before it's laid upon the latter ;
Without the grand *conservatori*,
To put the few plain rules before ye ;—
Say what you will, the simple fact is,
The best instructor's *Doctor Practice*.
To prove I'm right I'll set before ye
Both Lindley, Loder, Herz, and Mori ;

From prejudices won't this wean ye?—
Then add young Bull*, and Paganini.

You say what's done, I'll say what's undone
By the academy in London ⁽¹¹⁾?
Have they enrich'd—come, let us see—
Our nation's stock of harmony?
Or show me just one thing about them,
That might not have been done without them.
What works from which it can be granted,
That such a school as this was wanted?
Not any that are known to me,
Will give the least celebrity.
One thing is sure, 'midst our disasters,
We'll ne'er more want for music-masters—
To speak a fact in just and true sense,
They swarm already to a nuisance.
I know that we shall gain some fruits
From this new system in recruits;
Which it will one day, I'll engage,
Prepare for our declining stage:
And these, by such it will be granted
As love the drama, are much wanted.

* A violin player from Norway, (where shall we have musicians from next?) whom I heard at Naples and at Rome. He possesses great taste and execution; he does many of the Paganini tricks with facility and ease; and is of no school; having (as he himself informed me) acquired all his knowledge from observation and practice.

But still the greatest benefit
To be derived from this plan yet
Is to be told—and that you'll meet
Ere long in ev'ry public street.
For there'll be soon such competitions
Among the numerous musicians,
That I'll be glad if they will show facts,
How else these men can fill their stomachs.
And what in England's been so long
Disgraceful quite to look upon,
Will then be soothing, sweet, and winning—
I mean our horrible street singing⁽¹²⁾.

How often various folks we see miss
An inclination, for a genius.
And hence so many boys are sent,
'Gainst Nature's meaning and intent,
'To hammer notes into their brains;
Which, if their parents had ta'en pains
To search a bit, their little ones
Might have been sent to hammer stones,
Or wood, or leather, which might be
Useful to the community.

Might not this new-discovered art
Of feeling bumps in ev'ry part
Of men and women's bodies whence
They can pronounce, with confidence,

Upon their just propensities,
Prevent all these anomalies ?

I recollect, some time ago,
A person wish'd my thoughts to know
About a calling for his son ;
When like what follows this pass'd on
The subject ; which, without a doubt,
He'd quite made up his mind about ;
For many ask, for asking's sake,
Advice they do not mean to take.
“ My friend, if you'd be ruled by me,
“ I think your son brought up should be
“ To some good trade ; *viz.*, to a baker,
“ Carpenter, tailor, or shoemaker.”
“ Oh, Sir—but then the lad, between us,
“ Has for that music such a *genius* ;
“ Dear, it would give you quite new life
“ To hear him play upon the fife.
“ Besides, good Mister So-and-so
“ Has promised me the lad shall go
“ To where they plays, and where they sings,
“ And all these them there sort of things.”

So hence from this increasing panic,
We lose a useful, good mechanic ;
And what perhaps than this still worse is,
We get bad music to our verses.

I think I'm quite right when I say 'tis
The fashion likewise for the ladies,
To learn here both to play and sing,
And ev'ry necessary thing
That may enable them to shine
Before the public in that line.
But while they labour for this measure,
I fear they lose a greater treasure ;
And skill they gain but at expense
Of modesty and diffidence :
And what earthly gifts can even
Be compared to those of Heaven ?
Nor wealth nor beauty we esteem,
Wanting this soft celestial beam.
It's like the bloom upon the tree,
Before the budding fruit we see ;
And all accomplishments, 'tis plain,
Without this *greatest* are in vain :
'This is the wish'd-for charm of life
In man's companion, and his wife.
And in whatever rank and station,
'The aim of woman's education
Should be to train the mind to this—
The most substantial earthly bliss.

Young females standing up before
A public audience, is much more

I think, befitted to impart
A callous feeling to the heart ;
Which courts applause, but at th' expense
Of sweet, attractive, innocence.
Such education, I'll engage,
Will best prepare them for the stage ;—
If they're to act the *wife* and *mother*,
You'd better far give them another ⁽¹³⁾.

Naught in the world looks half so pleasing,
Naught in the world is so deceiving,
As when, from some commanding height,
A village first attracts the sight.
Oft, in lone dales, they smiling rise,
A seeming earthly paradise ;
Or, on a vine-clad summit lie,
Like white clouds in an azure sky.
But, only set your foot in there,
The magic scene dissolves in air.
On ev'ry side is seen distress,
Rags, dirt, and squalid wretchedness.
A single chamber oft supplies
Protection for large families :
And, in addition, I should note,
For ducks and fowls—a pig and goat—
Or e'en an ass, it is not rare
To find the filthy dwelling share.

But, who can paint the dirt one meets,
In traversing these village streets—
The modest muse would blush for shame,
If I should venture once to name
The sights and smells, that quite disgust ;
So, you must take the thing on trust :
And, in mind-seeing, all your tact
Will ne'er exaggerate the fact.

I think the Opera is, in no sense,
Half so good, just now, in Florence,
As it was, when I was last here,
In the season of the past year.
For then, we had some little mixture ;
But, now, one opera's a fixture.
“ Il Furioso San Domingo (¹⁴)”
Contains some pretty things to sing, though
I cannot say it's my delight,
To see Domingo ev'ry night :
Besides, a work, however curious,
Is sure to tire, if *always* furious.
So, as there seems no likely changement
In the opera-house arrangement,
I'll take my leave, the week to come,
And bend my steps as far as Rome.

LETTER IV.

Rome, 1835.

I stopp'd at Terni on my way,
And pass'd the best part of a day
Among the mountains' craggy tops ;
The cascades, waterfalls, and rocks :
And even pleased myself a bit
With what, upon the spot, I writ
On this sublime, romantic scene—
This picture of a fairy dream ;
That first appals the mind with fright,
Then sinks it into soft delight.
Methinks I hear you now cry out,
“ Where are these lines you talk about ? ”
Oh ! that is quite another story—
They never can be placed before ye.
An instant list, and you'll descry,
The real *wherefore* and the *why*.

At night, before I went to bed,
I was (and very oft am) led
To read a page or two of Byron—
An occupation I ne'er tire on :
When, to my very great surprise,
The first few words that met my eyes,
Were—" roar of waters," in a page
Of the Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.
I'll venture fearlessly to say,
No poet in our, or any day,
Or any country, any clime,
Has e'er accomplish'd so sublime
A picture of a waterfall,
As this (to which I more than call
Your very serious attention)
For truth, force, beauty, and invention.
While fix'd on these, in keen desire,
Mine dropp'd unheeded in the fire.
And had they ever met your sight,
You might have said, and said quite right,
In no place else a single line
Had any other chance to shine.

Whate'er thy faults may be to some,
Welcome to me again, dear Rome.
They call it dull—I do not doubt it—
But still there is a charm about it—

A something that attracts me more
Than all the racket and the roar
Of Naples, or old Reggio,
Where Stentor sent his brats I know ;
For faith, none else of human kin,
Could ever make half such a din.
I own my quiet temperament
Feels much more pleasure and content
In scenes of sober contemplation ;
More fitted to my situation.
I love, alone, to muse among
Remains of splendour, long since gone :
Suppose what marvels time's bereft us,
From those that barbarism left us :
Then people ev'ry spot before me
In all its early pristine glory.
And, culling from the ancient store
Of venerated classic lore,
Follow the Roman glory on
To that great height, from which it shone ;
Then sighing for its sudden flight,
Retrace it back to Gothic night ⁽¹⁵⁾.

Rome now contains—perhaps e'en more—
Churches and chapels, fifteen score :
All well appointed ; every man
With ammunition vatican.

A certain salvo for each evil,
Of that sly enemy, the devil.
If mumbling latin won't avail,
The gentleman with horns and tail
Is then attack'd with relics—dry bones
Of saints, the arms, toes, legs, and thigh bones ;
Which seldom fail the fiend to hamper,
And make him turn his back, and scamper
Away, as fast as hoofs can rattle,
From off the dreadful field of battle—
And other relics, not less good,
To scare away old Beelzebub :
Bits of garments, tapes, and garters,
Of the early female martyrs :
Then, in addition to all these,
There is the virgin's old chemise ;
Which legends (all of course true) tell,
Has saved so many folks from hell ⁽¹⁶⁾.
In short, the devil has no chance
Against such varied ordinance ;
And the different resources
Of the pontiff's standing forces.
And then their numbers—'twould affright you,
If I were only just to write you
A list complete of all I've seen,
In many churches, where I've been.
In St. Peter's may be number'd,
If not more, at least three hundred :

Cardinals, bishops, deacons, singers,
Priests, and sacristans, and ringers.
Then take a walk in any street,
And ev'ry third man that you meet,
I'll lay a bet, is either friar,
Or else a monk, or priest, or prior.
Now, joking for a while put under,
How can one for a moment wonder,
With such a drain upon the state,
Its coffers are so desolate?
Nor will the Pope, with all his care,
E'er have a single groat to spare ;
Until he sends these idle hands
Away, to till the barren lands.
And many a strong-arm'd monk, I trow,
I see, fit only for the plough.
And if I might judge from the face,
Precisely *that* is just the place
That nature, with unerring skill,
Design'd the greater part to fill.

Before I've done with churches quite,
Perhaps 'twill be no more than right,
To say, that most of those in Rome,
Are thought (and justly so) by some,
To be more worthy of renown
Than any *lions* of the town :

And certainly, as to the arts
Of painting, sculpture—many parts
Contain a treasure, where you find
A fund to entertain the mind.

I'm sometimes told the singing *creatures*,
That do the duty at St. Peter's,
Are not so good as those we see,
Paid by the king of Saxony.
I've heard them both, with great attention,
Which makes me very bold to mention
My judgment, form'd upon this test,
Which, else, I'd let in silence rest.
So, if I err, I pray you grant
It is because I'm ignorant
About the matter that I mention—
In truth, I've not the least intention
To lead your mind at all astray,
By what I think, or what I say.
Oh, no !—I'm not one of your folks,
Who, for effect, just cut their jokes ;
And to amuse, will set before ye,
Any ridiculous, idle story ;
And write, your kind applause to gain,
Just what is floating in the brain.
For *truth*, this letter none can match it,
Because my muse ne'er *throws the hatchet* ;

Indeed, it's right that you should know,
She never uses the *long bow*.
Your prosing writers say strange things,
But heav'nly muses, graced with wings,
Despise, whatever tale may be,
That has not strict veracity.
So, you can swallow ev'ry bit here,
And circumstance that you find writ here.
But I should finish, beyond doubt,
The subject I began about;
Which was, as to the best that sings,
The Dresden or the Roman *things*;
(I've tried enough, at any rate,
To find a name that's delicate,
To call them by—but I'll not vex,
There is no *name*, when there's no *sev.*)
Now, I'll declare, whate'er may follow,
The pontiff's forces have it hollow.
I grant, the king of Saxony
Has music good—'tween you and me,
He well deserves it—for, if they
Would sing him masses all the day,
He'd never miss so straight and even
A passage to the gates of Heaven*.

* The King of Saxony has the character of being a great bigot.

Between the wall that yet surrounds,
And marks the ancient city's bounds,
And modern Rome, there is a space,
Where you may either shoot, or race
After a badger, fox, or hare,
And other game, which you'll find there—
So destitute of population
Is now its alter'd situation.

If you would ask me, what art still
Is follow'd up here with most skill ;
I should say, that next to priestcraft,
Which, in Rome, is yet the chief craft ;
Begging, without hesitation,
Ranks the next in estimation.
In this, their skill and perseverance
Is quite unique in my experience :
And, though most cities in this clime,
Have clever *artists* in the line,
It's certain, none have ever shown
The power and tact of those at Rome (¹⁷).

The Romans oft by practice tell ye,
That ev'ry thing's made for the belly ;
Whether the creature cleave the air,
Or on the earth inhabit there ;
Or crawl in ditch, or swim in sea,
Or river, or where'er it be :

But very few, which I can note,
That e'er escape a Roman's throat.
His stomach 's a digesting place
For all—except the human race.
And though, 'tis clear, most things they cram,
I never heard they eat a man.
Put down a roasted crow or jackdaw,
A real Roman ne'er will lack jaw ;
A cuckoo, swallow, hawk, or tom-tit,
And such like, is to them a BONNE bit.
I do not think they feed on rats ;
But I have ascertain'd that cats
Are often eaten up, by some
Among the lower ranks at Rome (¹³).
Now understand the thing quite clear ;
I do not mean to say that e'er
The higher, or the middle race,
Show such a vitiated taste—
Indeed, far from it—I don't know
That, in my travels, I can show
A better sample of good breeding,
Choice vintages and tasty feeding,
Than I have seen at table, when
I've dined with Roman gentlemen.

I contemplated, with some dread,
The awful steep, and dizzy head

That I should feel, whene'er in sight
I came of that most fearful height,
The old renown'd Tarpeian rock ;
The fall from which gave such a shock,
As never fail'd, so authors tell us,
To set at rest those sad poor fellows,
That happen'd, in an evil hour,
To thwart a wicked tyrant's power.
Nor did the thickest Roman crown,
That I can find, e'er tumble down
This horrid precipice, without
Its whole contents being knock'd about ;
Nor was a bone left whole, within
The poor unhappy culprit's skin.
But on inspection, at this hour,
You're forced to call in fancy's power,
To picture all those scenes of dread
About the spot, that have been said.
For now, jump down and back again
You may, without much toil and pain.
An English sportsman, in the chase,
Would not be stopp'd at such a place ;
But clear the rock in half a minute,
There's now so little danger in it.
So chang'd some spots in ancient Rome
To modern travellers have become.

The English that are here declare
The opera is too bad to bear.
For my part, I cannot agree
To join in this severe decree.
I grant it's not the best I've seen,
But, faith ! at many worse I've been.
By lines already writ, you'll see
My friends and I can ne'er agree
Upon this theme. They will decide,
By simply viewing the outside :
With them, the pattern's quite enough,
And not the goodness of the stuff.
But I affirm (and do not doubt it)
They know, or care no more about it,
Than Hecuba, or mother Eve ;
Who, I have reason to believe,
Ne'er learnt to either play or sing,
Or any such delightful thing ;
But spent their time (by author's showing)
In nursing babes, and fig-leaf sewing.
Now, let my countrymen confine
Their thoughts to Port, or Sherry wine ;
And then, I'll bet you what you please,
They're always right enough on these.
But honestly, 'tween me and you,
Upon the fine arts and virtù,
I'd not give much for what they please
To say to me respecting these.

They have but little taste for Spohr,
Meyerbeer, Cherubini, nor
Does Spontini's modulation
Ever meet their approbation.
So dull the ear, so cold the heart,
Th' inspired strains of sweet Mozart,
Please seldom like a Vauxhall song,
Or, "Molly, put the kettle on."
Nay, only just the other night,
I was tormented by a wight,
Who told me, in a perfect pet,
'Twas all sad stuff to "Hart's last set *"—
Or, "Moll i' the wad"—or, "Fairy Elf"—
Or, "Go t' the devil, and shake yourself †."

You see, in various parts of Rome,
In different architecture, some
Fountains, so splendid, that their plans
Appear the work of fairy hands:
Materials of a vast expense,
Designs of striking excellence.
Rivers of water here are spent,
In purposes of ornament;
Alas! alas! but how far less,
In purposes of usefulness.

* Mr. Hart is a voluminous composer of quadrilles.

† Names of country dances.

I wish they 'd use more on their floors,
And both within, and out their doors ;
And none can tell, but he who knows it,
The joy of water in a *closet* ;
But many great events will come,
Before that joy is known in Rome ;
So little in their contemplation,
Is any joy, but vegetation ;
And as their fathers jogged along,
They 're just contented to jog on ;
And in the streets the dirt to lay,
And see the water waste away.

I 'm sorry, quite, I cannot show,
How people kiss the good Pope's toe ;
But I have not the custom seen,
Or at an audience ever been.
The Pope has never sent to call me
Unto his palace Quirinale.
I know not if the subjects kneel,
Or if the Pope cocks up his heel :
I 'd like to tell the thing to you,
More than I 'd like the thing to do ;
For there can be no marv'llous treat
In kissing an *old woman's* feet—
I beg his pardon—pray forget
This disrespectful epithet.

I know not any period, when
I've made a like slip of the pen ;
Besides, it is a thing uncommon,
To take a Pope for an *old woman* !
So pray don't let a word be said
Of what I've mentioned on this head.
I find this little *cob*, I ride,
Is sometimes rather hard to guide,
And often starts about and *shies*
At any queer, odd thing he spies.
I must, in future, be more guarded,
Or stand a chance to be rewarded
For all my horrid profanation,
With papal excommunication ;
Or with an interdiction, ne'er
Again my impious feet to dare
Within his city's walls to set,
Or, in a prison I may get :
And as he says he holds the key,
(It's not a *lion* one can see ;
Because popes always safely lock it,
Or, guard it in the breeches pocket—
The parenthesis I must prolong,
To say, if he's got *breeches* on ;
For no one can distinctly note,
He wears so long a *petticoat*.)
Of that bless'd gate, my daily prayer
Has long been to find entrance there.

I should not like him to refuse
Admission—so I'll not abuse
His Holiness. But, I'm inclined
To think, he'll leave the key behind ;
And, still repenting sinners may
Yet hope to find a certain way
Of gaining, when they've finish'd this,
A life of everlasting bliss.

One ruler, as a right, demands
You'd bow your head, and kiss his hands :
When to another's court you go,
You're ask'd to stoop, and kiss his toe :
And it is hard to say, from this,
What part they'll ask you next to kiss.
I think, they're nature's broad way missing,
In practising new kinds of kissing.
They may kiss *this*, they may kiss *these*,
They may kiss just what part they please ;
But, I'll maintain, more joy they'd sip,
From kissing a sweet woman's lip.

Men oft resemble so each other,
You'd think the father and the mother
Of either party you could name,
Must be, without a doubt, the same.
The closest likeness I have noted,
And one deserving to be quoted,

Is here, between the Pope of Rome,
And that droll dog, John Reeve, at home.
Now, it was never told to me,
If John's papa, in Italy,
Had pass'd a season, any time
When he was in his youthful prime—
Or, if the Pope had play'd the lover,
And ever slyly cross'd to Dover—
Or, if the parties, men and wives,
Had ever met in all their lives—
If not, then all that can be said,
Is, Chance a freakish trick has play'd:
For, if the Pope e'er had a son,
It surely must be honest John.
I never see his Holiness
Without a feeling of distress,
That I'm obliged my mirth to smother,
And feign some odd pretence or other,
To stifle whim, which would disgrace
Both me, and such a sacred place ;
The Pope so brings my mind upon
That funny son of Momus, John
Reeve—and of whom the very sight,
Is sure to make me laugh outright :
And when I'm near the Pope, decorum
Can scarcely keep me grave before him ;
He so reminds me that I see
John Reeve burlesquing tragedy.

In Rome, sight-seeing, I declare,
Is quite a troublesome affair :
And, added unto which, what's worse,
A tax upon your health and purse.
This walking all day, tires to death,
It wants an organ-bellows breath ;
And riding to all places, *you* see,
Requires a pocket full of *scudi*.
Beside, they always make a rout,
At things no creature cares about :
But only once the trade begin,
You're forced to go through thick and thin ;
For, when you home again once come,
You always find that there is some
Good temper'd friend, who asks about
What he is sure you ne'er found out ;
And, if you happen to say, "No"—
He tells you back again to go ;
For *that's* the only thing in being,
That he conceives the least worth seeing.

Old Sheridan, one time, set forth,
To visit, with his son, the North ;
And, passing by a colliery,
The son express'd a wish to see
The very bottom of the hole,
From whence they dug the dirty coal.

“ But why a step take,” said the old one,
“ So troublesome, and eke, a bold one ?”
“ Why, one would like to say, I ween,
“ That in a coal-pit one had been.”
“ Well, foolish boy, you make me stare—
“ Can’t you *that say*, and not *go* there ?”

Now, if we could adopt this plan,
Propos’d by Mister Sheridan ;
’Twould save us much what now we pay for,
Besides some hot days sweating labour.

Here are remains of ancient grandeur,
Of early Roman gorgeous splendour ;
And various works of art, which one
Can ne’er be tired of looking on :
But ev’ry ten bricks stuck together,
That have escaped the storms and weather ;
And bits of columns, and pilasters,
Just left from Time’s tooth, and disasters* ;
Or, parts of trunks, so mutilated,
Their sex can scarce be estimated—
These, I’ll not search for, at th’ expense
Of both my time and common sense.

* Dupaty, a witty French traveller, has said that the people of Rome take care of their ruins as beggars keep open their wounds, and for the same reason.

'Tis true, I know some connoisseurs,
Who always pass their vacant hours
In hunting after bits of stone,
Or marble, ivory, or bone ;
Or article in Terra Cotta,
So crack'd and broken, there is not a
Single likeness, trace, or feature,
Of any thing that 's known in nature.
And then the boundless ecstasy,
When any little bit they see—
For, from the joy and pleasure shown,
You 'd think they 'd just found out the stone
Call'd the *philosopher's*—and which
Has power to make its holder rich.
I ne'er can enter into this
Excessive agony of bliss,
About a thing, at any rate,
Quite useless, if indefinite.
They call me stupid, dull, and heartless,
All true—but then, let me be artless :
Now, pray, what name would I deserve,
Should I declare, without reserve,
I feel a passion for a thing,
The which I take no int'rest in ?
Why, sure a name that 's less exempt
From reprehension, and contempt—
So, to preserve my truth, I 'll try,
And keep the one they call me by.

Whene'er we find that mystery,
Is clear'd away from history,
By hunting deeply in the store
Of mould'ring antiquated lore ;
Inquiry I would follow on,
'Till ev'ry chance and hope were gone.
No connoisseur, with all his zeal,
Can any other use reveal ;
For, barring this, 'tis childish whim,
Mere antiquarian gossiping—
A doll, a plaything of no use,
But grown-up babies to amuse.

What artful, sly, and cunning ways,
Some men pursued in former days :
Often employ'd in worldly pleasures,
And all the while, pretending measures,
That for the country's weal alone,
Were all they were engag'd upon !
The heathen priests, we clearly see,
Most skilful in this trickery :
The artful rogues could ever show
One track, and by another go.
These gentlemen were most complete
In ev'ry artful, cunning cheat ;
And, on reflection, 'twill be granted,
To be the very thing they wanted :

Because, from what we read about it,
Their trade was useless, quite, without it.

How much more blest, in modern times,
Are we, in pious, good divines.
But love and meekness now are shown,
From curates, to the bishop's throne.
No vain conceits—no thought of self—
No panting after worldly pelf:
No looking down, with pride and scorn,
Upon the man more lowly born.
They stand, as their great Master stood—
Meek, poor, and lowly, doing good :
Not preaching nonsense, to deceive,
But just the truth, what they believe ;
Ne'er meddling in the state affairs,
But all their time is spent in prayers,
And lectures, to the wicked sinners,
And furnishing the poor with dinners.
Now, if they truly would abide
By precepts of their heav'nly guide ;
There need no more be writ or said—
It's just the path that they should tread.
But I must leave this wand'ring vein,
And turn to ancient Rome again.

King Numa was a pretty sample,
One ought to quote, as an example ;

He practised fraud, with most complete art—
He often went to meet his sweetheart ;
And told his friends and wife, at home,
It was to meet a nymph, or some
Ærial being—I know not what—
To have, on state affairs, a chat :
Nor could he have contrived a place,
Much better suited to his case,
To keep a mistress snug from view in,
Than near that antiquated ruin,
That now is called Ægeria's fountain,
Just at the bottom of a mountain ;
The sweetest spot I ever saw,
For making either *love* or *law*.
A spot Pompilius well might walk to,
And have a little private talk to
The lady, and in time get home,
For it's not very far from Rome.
At last his wife said, 'twas not right
To leave her all alone at night,
And in the country take the air,
Going, no soul on earth knew where ;
And so, to keep a peaceful home,
And please himself the time to come ;
He hit upon this happy way,
To lead his friends and wife astray.
I grant the scheme a little odd is,
To say he went to meet a goddess ;

But Numa swore with all his might,
Such was the very fact each night :
And that she gave him information
On subjects vital to the nation.
This trick in Numa's days might do,
It would not suit the taste just now :
If I mistake not, he would fail
To gull a wife with such a tale—
Nymphs don't in private now meet kings,
To chat on such dull serious things :
I would not pledge my word to prove
They have not often met on *love* ;
But such affairs, just at this time,
Are no concerns of your's or mine.

No ladies now, in these our days,
Would tolerate such naughty ways ;
They'd Numa show another course,
And bring an action of divorce :
He'd have an arbitrary summons
To show himself at *Doctors' Commons*.
Or, if the law could not be had,
They'd give him what is quite as bad,
Or even worse, to bear, some say,
A curtain lecture ev'ry day ! !

Thank heaven, now we never hear
That females wish to interfere

In government affairs and leagues,
State patronage and court intrigues.
Some people say (devoid of sense)
That ladies *still* have influence ;
But such a wicked intimation
Applies not to the English nation.
And long may we our laws protect
From such a mischievous defect ;
Nor *petticoats* a power e'er get
Within a British cabinet.

If I leave Rome, and should not speak
About the far-famed holy week,
I do suppose that while I live,
You never would the fault forgive.
It will not incommode me much,
Upon the subject just to touch.

I quarrel with no faith ; but mine
To ceremonies don't incline ;
Nor can I lay the smallest stress
On change of attitude and dress—
Or what shaped cap is on the head—
Or whether it be white or red :
Nor will the strangest customs, even,
Of man's device, get one to heaven.
The only end, it seems to me,
Of true religion, ought to be

To make us virtuous and good—
At least that's how I've understood
The Bible—nor, unto my seeming,
Have I mistaken its true meaning.
To speak the truth, I cannot find
These gaudy shows direct the mind
To that divine and just pursuit,
That makes the tree produce “good fruit”—
Witness the base rascality,
The lies and cheats of Italy.

This whole affair appears to me
But childish to the last degree.
From this, perhaps, it's easy known
My days of pantomime are gone:
Not that these things were an abuse,
When first we read they came in use;
Perhaps no better way had risen
To wean men's minds from paganism.
But customs, of whatever kind,
Should always keep pace with the mind:
And mind, in all its nice formation,
Is such a thing of education,
That what to-day appears most true,
To-morrow 'tis not wise to do.
But while men fatten by deceit,
They'll find excuses for the cheat.

How like to ancient Greece and Rome
The present cent'ry has become—
The higher wishing those below
To give up ev'ry jot they know ;
And credit what's elsewhere unheard of,
Or they themselves believe a word of.
They recollect that Pulcher lost
His battle 'gainst the Carthage host,
By forcing all the sacred pullets
To take salt water in their gullets.
So from old customs they'll not part 'em,
But follow them, *secundum artem*.

To Protestants it seems to be
A wonderful anomaly,
How men contrive these shows to bind
With piety upon the mind :
For surely nothing can impart
Less holy int'rest to the heart ;
And if Religion be not *there*,
In vain you'll search for her elsewhere.

The washing of the pilgrims' feet
Had been to me the highest treat,
Could I have but gone back to when
I was of years some eight or ten.
Now, e'en admitting all excuse
That can be offer'd for its use,

It ill accords with that blest light
That's bursting on a Gothic night.
It makes one blush to see and name,
Men earnest in a *baby-game*;
And as a type of what is meant
To bring to mind and represent—
It's just as like as is a potion,
Or draught unto the German Ocean.

No musical effects I've heard,
Can be in any way compar'd
To those inspired strains, which here
Fall softly on the ravish'd ear—
Such "dying falls"—so sweet, so new—
That ask like words to speak them true.

The misereres (there are three)
Are perfectly divine to me ;
Nor can I, when perform'd, detect
One single blemish or defect.
Each part melodious, full and free—
With force, yet soothing harmony—
Then dying soft upon the ear,
Until the feeble sound you hear
Is almost gone—and floats around
A faint aerial dying sound—
Soft swelling, then again the tone,
Th' enraptur'd mind is hurried on—

(And breathing almost seems intrusion,
In such a sweet, profound illusion)
From light affections unto deep ;
Until the soul but longs to weep
Itself from such a scene as this,
Into the realms of heav'nly bliss.

I envy not the cold, dull heart,
To which such sounds cannot impart
A joy unspeakable, and keep
The mind absorb'd in pleasure deep.

The choir's performance on each day,
Is quite perfection in its way ;
The misereres, so oft quoted,
Deserve e'en more than has been noted—
For this one thing's worth leaving home for,
And coming all the way to Rome for.
I know that many, in our days,
Find fault with just the thing I praise ;
They have no relish for such music,
Which is, they say, a Papist's true trick—
I fancy they but mean to state,
They don't like music of that date—
And madrigals, of fine invention,
Would share an equal reprehension :
With them the waltz and country dance
Has, ten to one, a better chance ;

And few quadrilles of any measure,
That don't afford such critics pleasure.

Some parts of this week's pageantry
Dramatic are to a degree,
If undescribed, you'd scarce conceive ;
And if unseen, you'd scarce believe.
Such bowing—nodding—change of dress—
And, what's to be observed no less—
The grouping—which is, most of all,
Fantastic and theatrical ;
Sometimes encircling in a ring,
Until the choir a service sing ;
Then wheeling off, they, one by one,
Regain the place from whence they've gone.
And words are wanting to express
The almost endless change of dress
The Pope, on some days, in an hour,
Poor, good old man's forced to endure.
My wonder I cannot refuse,
At how they recollect their *cues* :
The ceremony must be stated,
To be both long and complicated.
No grouping in a modern play,
Is half so puzzling in its way—
From hence, the Pope and Co. one sees
Are all bless'd with good memories.

I now behold, as clear as day,
How our performers learn the way ;
And how they all their knowledge gain
To dress the stage at Drury Lane.
Oh ! what sly dogs these actors are ;
They steal hints just from any where :
They steal from coronations—balls—
From courts of justice—Barons' halls—
And not contented with this scope,
The cunning rogues have robb'd the Pope.

Say what you will, write what you can,
Man 's ever borrowing from man.
From whence the earliest customs came,
Is not so easy now to name—
But this we 're certain of, at least,
Th' Egyptians stole their's from the east.
The Jews, while groaning with disasters,
Stole customs from their hard task-masters ;
And not contented with that measure,
Stole both their jewels and their treasure.
The Catholics cannot refuse
Their obligations to the Jews ;
For you can plainly trace, of course,
Their ceremonies to that source :
And what are left of our's at home,
Are from our old Mamma at Rome.

Words have no force to paint aright
The truly grand, imposing sight,
That ends this holy pageantry—
This week of gloom and revelry.
The benediction of his love,
The Pope delivers from above
To all the people in the square,
And troops drawn out, and kneeling there.
A crowd immense, at any time
I think imposing and sublime:
On this occasion—in this place,
The scene's beyond my pen to trace:
Imagine what effects you please,
Exaggerate you cannot these.

Th' illumination at St. Peter's,
Is one of the most striking features—
And persons all to please, has more chance
Than any in the week's performance.
The sparkling, blazing dome, seems even
To emulate the dome of heaven;
For who, before this, shining lights
Could place upon such fearful heights—
Since in the world there is but one
Saint Peter's dome to hang them on.

The fire-works at Saint Angelo
End brilliantly this gaudy show—

Nor can I one more striking mention,
For good effect and fine invention.
The rockets tow'ring up on high,
As if they meant to storm the sky :
But scoff'd at by each starry light,
They bow their heads and sink in night.
And sun-flowers turning night to day,
Then in a moment fade away—
Like ev'ry other joy on earth
They vanish almost at their birth.
And fiery forests in the air,
That quite astound one with their glare—
And what adds still unto the wonder,
'They rise in lightning, fall in thunder.
A foaming cascade—dripping fountain—
Beside a blazing burning-mountain,
With streaming lava down its side,
And flowing in a perfect tide ;
Then serpents, wheels, and squibs, and crackers,
And all such fiery, noisy matters.
It 's waste of time to lay a stress
On what one can so ill express.
Suffice it then for me to say,
That should his holiness one day
Take *Vauxhall Gardens*, and give there
This bright and splendid bill of fare,

He'd beat all managers I know,
E'en from the first, to *Hughes and Co.**,
And what is equally as certain,
He'd make a very rapid fortune.

- Hughes and Co., the present proprietors of Vauxhall Gardens.
-

LETTER V.

Naples, 1835.

This letter was addressed to a Gentleman residing in Weymouth.

THE view of Naples, some folks say,
Reminds them of our Weymouth bay—
I think these flatt'ers are in fun,
Or shoot with far too *long a gun*,
In placing us upon a par
With scenes which are so very far
Beyond our county to compete with,
Or, in the kingdom e'en to meet with.
For, till our open, naked hills
Are cloth'd with orange-groves and rills—
With ancient ruins—modern villas,
And waving trees that kiss the billows;
The likeness is as far from truth
As east from west, or north from south.

In short, this is enchanted land,
Form'd by a fairy's magic wand—
Our's is a bleak and barren steep,
Tho' very good for *Dorset sheep*.
Perhaps some wise-one next will prove t' us,
Our burning-cliff is like Vesuvius;
Or, that the fumes of my cigar
Eclipse its smoky columns far—
Or, that these weak and hobbling lines,
Have all the wit of Butler's rhymes—
Or, that —— but why employ more space?
I 've said enough to prove my case.

If noise can make a city gay,
Why then, I can most truly say,
This place is cheerful beyond measure—
That is, if din affords that pleasure.
For on my life, 'tis quite astounding,
To hear the drums and trumpets sounding—
The noisy shows each hour one meets,
And horrid racket in the streets.
The people here no occupations
E'er follow in their habitations.
The cobbler bawls, and thumps together,
His last, his lap-stone and his leather.
The tinker clanks his tin and brass;
The blacksmith shoes the horse or ass.

Indeed, whatever trade or clatter—
Of what description, or what matter,
Is practised in the open air,
Or most frequented thoroughfare.
And then, innumerable, come,
With voices fit to crack the drum
Of either ear, and stentor notes
That swell like trombones from their throats,
The basket-traders pouring down
From ev'ry alley of the town.
Noisy boys, with wares on asses,
Screaming to each one that passes—
Whistling, hollowing, and bawling—
Singing, bellowing, and squalling.
Just call to mind each horrid sound
That on this busy globe is found ;
Then add to these, some twenty more
Imported from the Stygian shore,
And you will have a specimen
Of dins I lay such stress upon.

But let me leave this noisy scene,
For one more tranquil and serene :
A city, in whose streets you roam
In death-like silence, all alone.
Tread o'er her precincts—no sound meet,
Except the echo of your feet ;

Or else the flutt'ring in the air
Of some lone bird that nestles there.
A breathless stillness all around—
Deep, penetrating, and profound.
A city that has late had birth
From out the mould'ring dust and earth :
And customs now with clearness show,
Of near two thousand years ago.
I love Pompei's walls to trace,
And muse upon a by-gone race—
Visit her forum, and step o'er
Her temples, theatres; explore
Each deep recess, where I may see
Tokens of her economy.
If Naples had no other claim,
This disentomb'd old city's fame
Is more than ample to repay
For all the labour of the way.

Lo! Pæstum's ruined temples stand
Some sixty miles along the strand
From hence; upon a spreading plain;
On one side mountains, and the main
Upon the other. Legends write
It flow'd up once unto the site
Of this once Grecian colony—
Now one mile distant from the sea.

Old Neptune's temple still remains,
To prove how futile are the pains,
The whims, the fancies, and the tricks,
Of architectural empirics,
To add one beauty to a part
Of this all perfect Grecian art :
And Pæstum's Doric temples show
The taste three thousand years ago—
The most esteem'd, Time's mould'ring hand
Has left us in this favour'd land.
You do not find here much beside,
To pay you for so long a ride.
A small bit of the wall remains
Perfect ; and that is worth the pains
And trouble of a strict inspection ;
In workmanship, it is perfection ;
And jointed with such skill, each block,
You 'd think it all one solid rock.
These, and some traces of a street,
Are all you now in Pæstum meet :
But if you wish her mine t' explore,
Of splendour in lost days of yore—
Go seek them in Salerno's walls,
Cathedral, churches, banquet halls—
Columns and capitals, the best o' em,
All rent, and stol'n away from Pæstum—
(Confound this name, it plagues me sadly,
It rhymes with any word so badly.)

The Naples' costumes are quite pretty,
Seen in a print-shop in the city.
The London artists, in their traces,
Show all the figures with clean faces ;
Nor do they ever represent
A single fracture, hole, or rent,
In jacket, trowsers, or in hose—
The cunning rogues, they hide all those :
They care not much the truth to tell,
If they can make their pictures sell :
And who would stick 'gainst walls or niches,
Men without stockings, shirts, or breeches ?
They know their customers, forsooth,
Want pretty pictures more than truth :
And hence, you striking objects see,
You ne'er can find in Italy ;
For here, if I the fact must speak,
They never shave but once a week ;
And as for water—why immersion
Just happens to be their aversion.
Now filth, and dirt, and rags, and tatters,
Much nearer represent these matters,
Than these fine garments, with such tact,
They put upon each wretch's back :
Why, you can see with half a glance,
They're copied from a *ballet dance* :
At any rate there's not a feature
Approaching any thing to nature.

I fear the day will ne'er come, when
The sketchers will be honest men :
And sketching ladies likewise may
Improve a little in this way :
For some of them, I must pronounce,
Are very much inclined to bounce—
I mean with pencils, not with tongue ;
Which, e'en to hint at would be wrong.
Oh, no !—I never could imply
Young ladies condescend to lie.

We've lots of English folks at Rome,
And Naples too ; the most of whom
Just pass their time, if I must say truth,
As they would do at Bath or Weymouth :
Nor am I quite wrong in asserting,
More hours are spent in chat and flirting,
And idleness of ev'ry kind,
Than either with the head or mind ;
Wasting their precious time all day,
At night quadrilling it away.
The sage mammas—not very wealthy—
Declare that dancing is so healthy,
That it would be a perfect slaughter,
Should they forbid it to a daughter :
And, as we know that health alone
Dictates this kind opinion,

I think 'twould be a sin to doubt it,
Or say a single word about it.
Some envious folks, I know, pretend
The manifest and only end
Of taking daughters from their home,
About in foreign climes to roam,
Is but to get them off their hands,
Fast tied in matrimonial bands—
A wicked, sly insinuation,
Without a shadow of foundation!!

Where'er the English congregate,
Most wretched, truly, is their state,
If they cannot, just as they may,
Trifle both time and life away :
Nor is the thing confined to station,
To age, or sex, or situation.
I've heard a parson preach on Sunday,
And seen him foot a dance on Monday ;
And both perform'd, without one trace
Of learning *this*, or *that*, of grace.

I do not wonder men with no sense,
Oft go from home to Rome or Florence ;
And then return, but to declare
To all their friends that they've been there.
For if a young man takes the pains
To study, and improve his brains,

The pert young misses call him fool,
And turn him into ridicule ;
And names opprobrious will invent,
To mark derision and contempt :
The very last, in scandal's muster,
Has been to call the man "*disguster* (¹⁹) !"

Now after this, pray who can marvel
That young men, when they go to travel,
Should be as careless about knowledge,
As they have been at school or college :
For bold's the man that can despise
Derision shot from sparkling eyes ;
And, give the thing what name you please,
'The women rule men's destinies (²⁰).

With few exceptions you may see
In ev'ry shop in Italy,
A picture with a light before it—
And sometimes two, they so adore it.
'Then just a moment bring to mind,
A print of the most common kind ;
Such as, with you, are sold to any,
About a dozen for a penny ;
And let it but the Virgin be,
Holding a baby on her knee ;
It's fram'd, and hung up at the door,
Enabling them to cheat the more ;

And if a lamp before it—worse—
If two—take care to guard your purse :
For when they are devout and civil,
They 're always nearest to the devil.
One half the population are
But *cheats* and *beggars*, I declare ;
And then the other half one meets,
Are form'd of *beggars* and of *cheats* ;
Exceptions I have met with, some—
At Naples, certainly *not one*.

In England, if we e'er beat down
A tradesman, he begins to frown ;
But when you haggle here the while,
You always see the dealer smile.
Give him just what he asks, he 's sore
He did not ask a little more ;
But beat him-down, and then he 's sure
He 's got the most he could procure.

Into Calabria talk of going ⁽²¹⁾,
And all your friends, long faces showing,
Begin a shocking, dread account
Of murders, to a long amount ;
That makes the hair upon your pate,
From fear, erect itself as straight,
As quills upon a porcupine—
(Observe this simile 's not mine)

That is, if you've got hair upon 't—
For my part, I'm but thin in front :
I find the greatest weight of mine
Is creeping very fast behind.
Suppose Italians to be
Well skill'd in ev'ry roguery ;
And granting murders have ta'en place,
By many of the scoundrel race—
Yet still I think the thing's debated
Until the danger's over-rated.

What odd and unexpected marvels,
Some people meet with in their travels :
The Goddess of Events (if there
Be such a lady in the air)
Has never deign'd to favour me
With proofs of her divinity :
But suffers me from day to day
To jog on in a hum-drum way,
Without affording me, once, e'er
An incident to make folks stare.
Much happier some, who never roam
A single week or two from home,
Without adventures—so sublime—
Fit for a Christmas pantomime.
I've heard of those a sheet could fill,
Just from Cheapside to Highgate Hill,

With strange adventures on the way,
Which have enabled them to say
A hundred incidents and sights,
As strange as the *Arabian Nights*.
Now, I have often been distress'd
To think how little I am bless'd
With this imaginative vein,
Just suited so to entertain
Your dearest friends, with where you've been.
And what you've heard, and what you've seen.
But that said lady, just now quoted,
Has made a solemn vow, that noted
No tour of mine shall e'er become,
For what strange things I've seen or done.
Pray do not think, I wish t' advance,
These people fib, or e'en romance—
It's farthest from me, to imply
That trav'lers ever tell a lie:
For such no tourists e'er have cause shown,
At least, since *Baron Count Munchausen*.
I only say, howe'er it be,
They're favoured greatly more than me—
Nay, e'en Vesuvius ne'er will vomit
Smoke, fire, and flame, when I go on it,
But rests in quiet slumbers, deep,
Just like a cradled baby's sleep:
So, when I trace my steps again,
I've little left me for my pain,

Except a pair of dirty hose,
Well burnt, and shoes still worse than those.

In Naples, pilf'ring is a trade
That very rapid strides has made—
Indeed, it almost is perfection,
And seldom subject to detection.
A handkerchief, unless you lock it,
You cannot keep long in your pocket ;
A friend of mine, the other night,
Met with a wretched ragged wight,
Who piteously began t' implore,
“ *Ho multo fame, buon Signor.*”
My friend, of great benevolence,
Began to hunt out for his pence ;
And while his right he searched about,
The rogue his left pouch emptied out.
Nor can you get the least relief
If you should chance to spy the thief ;
For on a mob the rogue falls back,
Who all have gone the self-same track—
And in their shops there's not a man
That will not cheat you when he can ;
And if the thieves will cheat you there,
'Tis clear they'll rob you any where.
No wonder, in this population,
That rogues are held in estimation ;

And that they fly for safety, where
The greatest sympathy they share.
The *artists of the handkerchief*
Are impudent, beyond belief:
They rob here in the open day,
And if they're seen, scarce run away :
Or else, perhaps, the rascals scout
Some hundred yards, then turn about,
And there, depending on alliance,
Set all your vain threats at defiance ⁽²²⁾ ;
For ev'ry creature that in sight is
Appears to think the robber right is—
For lose your handkerchief or money,
They laugh, as if 't was something funny ;
Instead of lending their assistance
To overcome the thief's resistance,
They grant the rascal that protection
That just secures him from detection:
Being cheats themselves, they never smother
Affection for a falling brother.

When will the English cease to sigh
For pleasure 'neath Italia's sky ?
And honestly, to be sincere,
I blush to ask that question *here* ;
But hard it is to hide thoughts, when
Pure simple truth directs the pen.

In boyhood's days, when hopes are bright,
We paint each object, not in sight,
In colours glowing, ardent, keen,
But in youth's fancy only seen.
Then tell-tale time too quickly flies,
And one by one, from off our eyes
Unfolds the fairy, iris-bands,
And truth at last before us stands.

I used to think a carnival ⁽²³⁾
Must be a thing, surpassing all
Things that are underneath the sun,
For humour, frolic, whim, and fun.
Well, now I've seen one, I declare
It is, of all, beyond compare,
The very dullest thing on earth—
There's neither pleasure, joy, nor mirth :
Mask'd characters—but not a bit
Of any thing approaching wit—
Unless bedaubing in the way
Your neighbour's clothes with balls of clay,
Or flour,—be worthy of the name ;
For nothing else that I saw, came
Near to a joke, in any fashion,
Save some young Englishmen, whose passion
For driving made them start a coach,
That truly nearer did approach

To fun, than any in the show—
"T was called the *Brighton Tally-ho*.
It carried only four inside,
But out, as many as could ride.
" *Come si chiama Tally-ho?*"
Whisper'd a dame to me—" *Non so*"
Said I to her, and walk'd away ;
For truth to tell, I could not say.
I think you 'll own, at any rate,
It's rather puzzling to translate.
The King, a Chinese Mandarin,
The very dullest creature seen ;
And if the truth I must declare,
He look'd the part just to a hair.
The Queen's too handsome, far, to please,
Drest as a stupid, dull Chinese :
The King's set-out was very fine,—
Indeed, some folks call'd it sublime.
A Chinese temple moves along,
The wonder of a gaping throng ;
Hung round with foolery and bells,
Well deck'd to show the scene it tells :
Besides a guard of Chinese forces,
Most gaily clad, on Naples horses.
This show, believe me, most surpasses
For fools, pickpockets, knaves, and asses.
Some others of the Royal stock
Started a castle, or a rock

On six wheels ; which, in armour bright,
They guarded well, with valiant might,
Against whole showers of sugar-plums,
That here are used instead of bombs.
And sugar-plums, beyond all mention,
Are much the pleasantest invention ;
For bombs will often heads off take,
But sweat-meats only make them ache—
Or, cause a heart-burn, or the bile,
But that lasts seldom any while,—
And aching heads can soon be cured ;
If not, they 're easily endured :
But when they 're off, they 're past the skill
Of doctor's potion, draught or pill,
Which proves me right in what I 've said
A few lines back, upon this head.

The carnival—much more don't seem
Left me to say upon the theme ;
Vast crowds, and coaches, in the streets—
And ev'ry one his neighbour meets
With salutations of sweet balls
(Just so a peppering hail-storm falls)
Until black dominoes, in spite
Of ev'ry care, become quite white.
And this is truly what they call
A joyous, pleasant, carnival.

From this tom-fool'ry, 'tis but right
That I should here except a sight,
Which is, for splendour and for show,
The most effective thing I know.
The mask-ball, with which always they
Conclude this grown-up babies' play—
'Tis here *Teatro Carlo* seems
To realize our fairy dreams.
A thousand shining lustres light—
A thousand brilliant eyes more bright—
Tripping, bounding, full of pleasure,
To the music's sprightly measure,
Until Aurora's ruddy beam
Dispels the fascinating dream.

Now, if I must declare the truth,
These little kingdoms in the south
Are very like a canine pet,
That 's flatter'd till he'll sauncy get.
A little pretty, tiny darling,
But wayward, snappish, proud, and snarling—
A creature, that has tolerance
But from its insignificance.
A thing, with temper to annoy,
But not enough strength to destroy—
A being, to which power is lent
To raise, not anger, but contempt.

'The first annoyance they begin
'The moment that you enter in
'Their kingdoms, where they make you pay,
Or, some pert rascals stop your way.
For this almost direct demand—
Pretence—to hunt for contraband ;
As if one did not know the curse
Was only meant to hunt your purse.
They may assign just what, and wherefore,
But that, in fact, is all they care for.
Come to a city—you must pay,
Either to stop or get away ⁽²⁴⁾.
In short, I know no human force
With power enough to guard a purse ;
For, under some nice feign'd pretence,
They're sure to finger out your pence.
Nor are *our* Consuls always free
From this mean paltry trickery.
They say the thing is nothing new,
And that their fee is just and true—
Why then, I truly blush to know
My country pays her servants so :
For, what you here may tolerate,
Is quite *unworthy* a great state.

But if 'tis right, it should be so,
I really don't the reason know,

Why ev'ry Consul sent from home,
To this or that place, or to *Rome*,
Should not pursue the straight, fair plan,
And try to act the gentleman.
But just as sure as I'm FREE BORN,
I've seen some shabby tricks, with scorn,
In Consuls of the British nation,
That merit little approbation.

But I have been quite led astray
From what I was about to say;
Which is, the pride they dare presume,
These little kingdoms, to assume.
In Naples, strangers all declare
The thing has got too bad to bear.
Their insolence—one time amusing,
And now humanity abusing—
And as I wish to write what's true,
Take two examples, which are new.

One day, while passing by a guard,
I recollected a reward
I ought to render to a servant
That had assisted me most fervent ;
And then, I just took out, at random,
To make a little memorandum,
A message-card and black-lead pencil,
But never dreaming, in my sense, ill ;

And then began to write away,
All what I ought to do and say :—
When straight up came a whisker'd soldier,
Who rudely tapt me on the shoulder,
And told me, with a haughty scoff,
I must not write there, but be off:
I show'd him soon, at any rate,
I'd not been plotting 'gainst the state—
Nor could he have a jot of reason
For thinking I was hatching treason—
Nor need he dread the least disaster
Against his jolly-looking master.
But all was useless, nor could I
The angry sent'nel satisfy.
As he'd a musket, and I none,
I made my bow, and so walk'd on.

The other tale that I must tell,
You'll see, did not conclude so well.
A friend of mine, much out of health,
Was walking one night by himself;
And passing near, with a cigar,
A station, while a guard was there—
Without once knowing, he avow'd
That such a thing was not allow'd;
The whisker'd rascal, with a frown,
But not a word, quick knock'd him down.

My friend, astounded with the blow,
Half rose, and wish'd the cause to know—
But with the butt-end of his gun
The wretch renew'd what he'd begun ;
And but for some kind friend who pass'd,
My friend had likely breath'd his last.
His arm was broken, and his head
So wounded, he long kept his bed.
Our minister, I must declare,
Lent all his aid in this affair ;
And the offending man was sent
To well deserved punishment.
But this did not, if truth be said,
Cure either my friend's arm or head.
'Tis true, the act might be repented ;
But better had it been prevented.

Full many evils, in my day,
Have been removed and swept away ;
To see, I ask but this last favour,
All *tyrants* whipt to good behaviour.

Here are ranged out to all beholders,
Lots of tall men, dress'd up as soldiers ;
Most *whiskerando* looking creatures,
With hair enough upon their features
To scare away from babes the wits,
Or frighten women into fits.

If courage did but come with hair,
I'd have no scruples to declare
They'd never more from battle run,
As formerly they've always done ;
But show their foes that valour's brisker
Under a modern well-turn'd whisker ;
Therefore the French, as well as Swiss
And Austrians too, their aim might miss,
If they should think to rule the roast here,
As, formerly it was their boast here,
And say a Neapolitan
Was but the tenth part of a man ;
Just as a drunken English sailor
Would say, in speaking of a tailor.
If enemies again should come
Against this land of song and sun,
Let them look to it—I'm their friend,
And very prudent counsel send—
For headed by their jolly king,
And each man with a well clothed chin,
They'd show their foes, before they'd yield,
Or run away, sport in the field.
Some people choose to blame the king,
And say it is a foolish thing
For him to keep a useless band
Of men, to drain wealth from the land.
Useless, indeed !—but I have said
What's quite sufficient on this head.

And sure a king like Ferdinand
Knows best himself how to command
His people, and his kingdom too,
Without advice from me or you.
Perhaps they'll next say, he's a fool,
And does not know well how to rule.
'Tis shocking quite, to hear such jokes
On royalty and royal folks;
I should not wonder next to hear
The wretches say (devoid of fear)
That kings and queens, were but the common
And human race of men and women—
Or, that their flesh and blood did not
Differ from our's a single jot.
Now was there e'er such horrid treason,
Without a proof, or without reason:
Can it be thought the world would be
So foolish in this century,
To lavish so much wealth and treasure
On kings, for their sole whims and pleasure?
If they, by virtues—talents—learning—
Were not, than others, more discerning—
Most surely not—the world's too wise
For such a wasteful sacrifice.
But all this scepticism falls
From those sad dogs the *Radicals*.
I'd send them ev'ry one to gaol,
Or whip them at a waggon's tail.

I should not wonder, if one hears
Them say, the sons of our old peers
Play sly aristocratic tricks
To keep in hand the bishoprics—
And that we have no right to pay
So many thousands in that way—
And that our bishops are at best
But drones upon the poor bees' nest,
Sipping all the sweetest honey ;
(Meaning, I suppose, our money)
And while the poor-paid curate, he
Does all the work and drudgery.
Indeed, there's naught, in any way,
Inquiring people will not say.

But this digression's led me from
The track that I was going on :
Which was to argue, that in spite
Of all that's said, this king is right.
But then the other party say,
Yes, but to keep these men in pay ;
And dress them up, in beards and caps,
Until they look most warlike chaps ;
He drains his subjects to distress,
Want, poverty, and wretchedness :
And gives one half of them good pay,
To keep the other in the way

That he would have them always walk in,
Viz. pay their taxes without talking.
Now bantering put quite behind ;
I question much but we shall find,
On close inspection, that such things
Are pretty common among kings,
And dukes, and emp'rors in the north,
And margraves, viceroys, and so forth :
Who, all *love ruling* have forgot,
And substitute, now, *cannon shot*.

I own 'twould save us heaps of treasure,
If they 'd adopt the former measure.
The standing armies of our kings
Are truly very costly things—
Not that I complaints would say for 't,
If the kings themselves would pay for 't ;
But all their lab'ring subjects are
The grievous burden forced to bear.
What man on earth would be content
To pay for his own punishment ?

From very early times we find
That kings were made to rule mankind.
How dare the wretches tell their masters
That any of their sad disasters
Are owing to the court expence,
Profusion, or extravagance !

How dare the sheep turn round, and say
Unto the shepherd, in which way
He ought to shear their fleece, and use it,
Or, whether squander, or abuse it !
It's but becoming and quite fit,
'That they be silent and submit.
Supposing he should spend their wealth
In gewgaws to amuse himself :
Do let them hold their tongues, nor say
Unto a sacred king, which way
The money, wrung from daily toil,
Shall make the royal kettle boil ;
Or, how a palace shall arise
In gorgeous splendour to the skies.

Now, kings and queens, like other bodies.
Of course, must have their little hobbies.
If, making babies, folks will try it,
Pray give them *dolls*, to keep them quiet.
'Tis true, their pastimes are extensive,
And, very often, most expensive ;
Palace building, for example,
Always forms a pretty sample
Among the hardships that the poor
Are forced to suffer and endure.
And here, the ruinous expence
That's swallowed, in the residence

That's called Caserta, would affright you,
If half the items I should write you.
Its vestibules, and marble walls,
Its chapel, theatres, and halls—
In short, half Naples might find there
Quite room enough, and much to spare.
I know there are some folks, who say
The king might find a better way
To spend the money—in road making—
In building bridges—undertaking
What, for his people, might no less
Add to their wealth and happiness.
But these are enemies to kings—
Your snarling, growling, Jacobins.
Rascally Radicals, I know,
Expect to reap the crop they sow :
And so they may ; but church and state
Must not a single tithe abate ;
But, while the people till the land,
Hold tight the curb-bit in the hand,
Or else they'll get too brisk to ride ;
Too proud for priests or kings to guide.

And here, I beg you'll bear in mind,
Whene'er of kings and priests you find
Me writing—it's but those I see
About me, here, in Italy.

I'd think myself unjust, to venture
Our own good folks, at home, to censure.
Indeed, I have a firm reliance,
Their worth sets censure at defiance.

LETTER VI.

Palermo, 1835.

THE coldest six weeks of the year
I've pass'd most comfortably here :
And if a fine romantic scene,
A climate mild, and sky serene—
If vine-clad mountains, fruitful vales (²⁵)—
If almond groves and orange dales—
If spots like these have power to charm you—
If smiling nature e'er can warm you—
No winter residence can be
Compared with that of Sicily.

Few days have pass'd, that I've not been
Warm'd by the radiant solar beam :
But cold and wet ones, let me tell,
Are here endured, not half as well
As where a carpet, fire, and rug,
Make ev'ry room so very snug,

That oft it is a pleasant matter
To hear, without, the tempest clatter :
But not so here on marble floors,
With cracks in window-frames and doors—
And no coal-fire to warm folks' faces,
Because there are no coal fire-places ;
And chafing-pans, with burning wood,
I do not think are half so good
As grates and blazing fire-light,
To pass away a stormy night.
Now here, in houses, you but meet
Arrangements made against the heat ;
The winter is so mild and short,
They note its rigours but in sport ;
And when they chance to talk about it,
It's but to laugh at and to flout it.

Far off, Palermo's city may
Be seen upon a sweeping bay :
On each side craggy mountains rise
In tow'ring summits to the skies ;
And distant isles, which seem to be
But white clouds resting on the sea ;
Nor can e'en fancy's day-dreams trace
A more romantic, lovely place.
And then there is a spacious plain
Between the mountains and the main ;

With rides and walks so intersected,
Whichever way your step's directed,
Some charming landscape meets the sight,
Some scene of pleasure and delight.

Both nuns and monks are here abounding ;
In numbers they are quite astounding ;
You'd think the people of the place
Had vow'd to crush the human race ;
Or form'd a league, at any rate,
'Gainst heaven's law—to propagate.

Some nunn'ries are of great extent,
And, joining each establishment,
You find a spacious high *chiesa*—
The splendour of them would amaze ye :
Which proves, that now, or very late,
Their revenues must have been great.
Go to these churches when you may,
At any moment of the day,
You'll find, at least, some four or five
Of all the dirtiest men alive ;
In the shape of monk, Capuchin,
Priest, friar, or some imp of sin,
In rusty gowns, with draggled tails,
And dirty hands—half mourning nails—
A greasy beard and snuffy chin—
All filth without—no sense within :

Black skull-caps on their empty pates,
And ears stuck close to little grates,
Hearing all these poor silly creatures
Confess the weakness of their natures :
For nothing else, I can make out,
These nuns have to confess about.
What sins can women (save in mind)
In such a situation find
To answer for—enclosed in floors
Of stone, and iron-pannell'd doors—
And windows shut, and gratings narrow,
That would not let in a cock-sparrow—
Unless it be a contrite sentence
Of their sincere heart-felt repentance,
For all the opposition given
To strict and wise commands of Heaven ?

From stories that have come to me,
Since I have been in Sicily ;
I fear some of the monkish race
Do not unfrequently disgrace,
By crimes atrocious and appalling,
Their sacred offices and calling.
A Roman doctor, settled here
To run the medical career,
Tells me, the first case that he had,
Was in a priest, so very bad,

It baffled almost all his skill—
Draught, lotion, potion, drench, and pill.
His cure was deemed a miracle—
But his disease?—mum—*not clerical.*

Another proof—this tale of woe
Occurr'd but eighteen months ago.—
Two men, in humble situation,
Employ'd to make an excavation,
Came to a passage underground,
Mysterious, gloomy, and profound.
They groped along, without a ray
Of light to guide them on their way.
At length a faint and feeble gleam,
Either imagined or seen,
Led them into a horrid room,
By vapours half obscur'd, and gloom—
A female body lay before
Their eyes, in putrid blood and gore.
Appall'd and horrified with fright,
With quicken'd steps they left the sight ;
And following one passage more,
They reach'd an iron-clamped door,
Which fear, that mingled with their wonder,
Gave them both strength to break asunder.

Now the affrighted workmen see
Into a convent's dormit'ry :

The monks and they began to stare,
Each wond'ring how they all came there.
The men related where they'd been,
And what a horrid sight they'd seen;
And while engag'd about the tale,
They saw two monks turn deadly pale;
And then, with aspects full of gloom,
Precipitately leave the room.
The men in secret were soon on sent
To the old prior of the convent;
Who told them what they thought they'd seen
Was merely whim—an idle dream—
A simple *ignis fatuus* sight,
Occasioned by their dread and fright;
And threaten'd them with all the evils
Of hosts of imps and fiery devils,
And everlasting pains of hell,
If the adventure they should tell.
But still, in spite of all this care,
The thing was whisper'd here and there;
And proved, beyond a doubt, to be
A piece of hellish villany
Of two wretches—pity loathing—
Rav'nous wolves, in mild sheep's clothing,
Who'd lured the woman to the place,
For purposes most vile and base;
And then, detection to elude,
Had stain'd their hands in human blood.

Fearing from what I may have said
Here, and before, upon this head,
You may imbibe a prejudice,
Unjustly, for the monkish race;
I ought distinctly to declare,
That bright examples are not rare,
Of virtue and urbanity,
Of honour and humanity.
But truth compels me still to say,
A greater portion of them may
Be reckon'd idle, uninquiring—
But little knowing—less desiring—
And superstitious in degree
Exceeding probability.
And such I've found the common case
Of this poor, sad, deluded race.

The lower ranks here, seem to be
Deep sunk in abject misery :
And beggars, almost numberless—
Disgusting objects of distress :
And when not busy in their calling,
In groups, in sunny corners sprawling—
Or, coupled two and two together,
Hunting the vermin from each other.
Nor is this nasty, dirty trick,
The sight of which quite makes one sick,

Practis'd in Palermo wholly
By the abject poor and lowly ;
But likewise by some other grades,
And such as follow little trades ;
The wives and daughters at the doors,
Are *chasing*, from the ample stores
Of *game* that nestle in their hair,
Or, on their garments, furrow there.
And if smear'd skins and matted locks
Be good preserves to guard their flocks
Of creatures, they'll not want, in short,
At any time, most noble sport.

One week there is, in ev'ry year,
When all the people that live here,
Have licence from the town-police
To be as foolish as they please.
'Twould give me no small joy to tell
The hist'ry of this festival ;
But only that I have some doubt
The story I shall not make out
Quite clear unto your comprehension—
However, I'll just try to mention
All I have heard and all I know
About this shocking tale of woe.

Once on a time ('tis thus begins
The web of ancient gossippings)

Lived here a spinster, Rosalia,
Of all around the *cara mia* ;
A lady young, of beauty rare,
And just as good as she was fair.
Well, sweet Miss R. had not the ways
We see in Misses now-a-days ;
She hated dress, she hated flirting,
She hated squeezing hands, and courting—
Detested parties, cards, and dancing,
Or murdering her hours by prancing
Up and down, in that appalling
Occupation, morning calling ;
But spent her time from door to door
In visiting the abject poor,
Administ'ring to their distress,
And soothing human wretchedness.
At last, she could no more endure
A wicked world she could not cure,
(For in Palermo, men and wives
Did then, as now, lead naughty lives)
And so she left them altogether,
And braving wind and braving weather,
She fix'd her dwelling on a spot—
A dreary, rugged, mountain's top,
Call'd Pelegrino.—Rumour says,
She lived and ended there her days.
But how she found the means to dress,
One cannot easily now guess ;

Or, where materials she got
At once to fill and boil her pot,
Would puzzle wiser heads than mine,
With satisfaction to define ;
For all the writers that have noted
Miss R. the subject have not quoted :
But this I'm sure, for I went there,
She must have lived upon the air—
For such a lonely rock—so steril,
Would not yield food to dine a squirrel.
But nice objections set before ye,
Are always sure to spoil a story—
And if it be a good and new one,
It matters not to be a true one—
But when it's dull and circumspect,
It always ought to be correct—
So I shall let it rest, nor try
To prove the story all a lie.

About this time, a horrid pest
Had fill'd with dread each anxious breast :
Its dusky wings spread all around
A scene of agony profound.
More numbers to the grave were borne,
'Than left behind their fate to mourn.
Some hundreds each succeeding day
Précipitately swept away.

The living few, appall'd by dread,
Shrunk from the last rites to the dead ;
And many a lovely maiden fair,
Whose breath had erst perfumed the air,
Now putrid, added to the dense
And dark devouring pestilence.
On this side splendid mansions lay
Deserted—all were swept away—
On that—one only left to moan
The fate of those untimely gone :
Domestic animals slow group
About the streets, and seem to look
For one who all their wants had fed—
For one who all their steps had led.
All now was gloom,—all now distress—
Horror, and abject wretchedness.

But see how, in a single day,
'This dreadful pest was swept away.
There lived, 'tis said, not far remote,
A farmer who had lost a goat ;
In search of which, one day, he got
On Pelegrino's very top ;
Where, to his horror and surprise,
Extended lay before his eyes
'The bones of Saintess Rosalia,
'The lady lately mentioned t' ye.

Some wicked sceptics choose to note,
'Twas but the dry bones of his goat—
But how absurd—how could he make
So great, so monstrous a mistake?
Could any man be such a baby,
To take goat's bones for bones o' a lady?
Most surely not—a heretic
Alone could contemplate the trick.
Your modern nice inquiring folks
Spoil all the ancient classic jokes—
I don't mean jokes—but histories
Innumerable, that one sees
In ev'ry olden chronicle—
All true, and quite canonical.

The countryman the bones bore down
Most reverently to the town.
Now mark—the gloomy bat-wing'd pest,
That hover'd o'er, from east to west,
Flew, like a borealis light,
Before the sacred hallow'd sight;
And ruddy health assum'd again
Her long-suspended jocund reign.
And such is the original
Of Rosalia's festival;
Which now they celebrate each year,
With joyous mirth and laughing cheer.

A car dress'd out with banners bright,
Pile upon pile, a fearful height—
In solemn state moves up and down
The leading *strada* of the town ;
'Midst muskets' rattle, cannons' roar,
Rebounding back from shore to shore—
Trumpets sounding, cymbals ringing,
With hooping, hollowing, and singing.
Now all this lasts, till hunger's pain
Tells them 'tis time to work again.

Palermo's city still contains
Some curious Saracen remains.
I think they conquer'd Sicily
About—about—why, let me see—
The year nine hundred, or some more—
I quote but from my men'ry's store ;
And therefore may not calculate
With certainty the proper date :
Nor has it much in any way
To do with what I have to say.
'The Ziza palace, let me mention,
Deserves the traveller's attention—
A splendid relic of the past,
And which, with care, still long may last.
Then, in the lower marble halls,
A purling limpid streamlet falls

Playfully, in a bath profound,
Most richly sculptured all around ;
From thence a fountain it supplies,
And afterwards is seen to rise
In graceful jets and iris rays,
All sporting in the mid-day blaze.

I do not think, at any time,
In any country, any clime,
There ever were, 'midst all their strife,
A people who enjoy'd a life
Of lux'ry, past comparison,
Like your bold turban'd Saracen.
The rogues nought wanted to make merry,
Except indeed old Port and Sherry—
And that, perhaps, if we could spy
Their secret lives, they tipp'd sly :
For they were all so curious
In every thing luxurious,
I doubt if they would quite forego
So sweet a balm to human woe.
They seem'd determined, at all rate,
On earth but to anticipate
The revels of eternity,
(Which I suspect they 'll never see—
The Alcoran this tale supplies,
But Mah'met told most horrid lies) ;

For nothing could exceed the measure
Of all their earthly bliss and pleasure—
Gardens, palaces, and fountains—
Fruitful vales—romantic mountains—
Seraglios teeming with delight,
With music, wit, and beauty bright.
But here I think, with deference,
Our custom has the preference ;
For surely women were for use meant,
Much more than simply man's amusement—
Or, if they were, I think it wrong
For man to wish for more than one—
Or, if with *two* or *three* supplied,
He surely should be satisfied ;
And not monopolize a *houseful*,
Which might to others be so useful :
I think no one should follow on
This fashion of King Solomon ;
But, like an honest, good, and true man,
Be quite contented with one woman.

I fear, that very many wives
And husbands here, lead naughty lives—
And that they do not always stand on 't,
But often break the tenth commandment.
Conjugal faith and chastity
Are little known in Italy ;

And people only seem to marry,
Intrigues the better on to carry :
The thing beside is done so cool—
So snug—methodical—by rule—
Not such a fuss and noise and clatter,
As we oft make about the matter.
In England, when a fickle wife
Gets weary of domestic life—
And leaves her husband's house and bed,
For one she likes full well instead—
Or, when a man, for change is panting—
Goes to his neighbour's *gallivanting*—
And just to vary his dull life,
Takes for a while, his *dear friend's* wife :
You 'd think, from what is said and penn'd,
The world was coming to an end—
Or that, at least, some comet's power
Was getting nearer ev'ry hour,
And which (I quote an almanack)
Would give our planet such a whack,
As might most likely send us prancing
Into unbounded space a dancing—
Such inuendos in the prints,
Such sly surmises, and such hints.
Mammas are fainting—sisters blushing—
And brothers to a duel rushing.
The lawyer making lengthy speeches—
“ The jury's strict regard beseeches

“ To facts—the most atrocious sort
“ That ever came before a court.”
Then follow statements of a case,
Too gross to notice in this place :
And this the public papers send
From John-o-Groat’s to the Land’s end—
And naught is talk’d about for days,
But Mistress B.’s inconstant ways.

But you must know the customs here
Are not so rigid and severe.
Before a girl has left the convent,
Where, for instruction, she’s been long sent,
A husband’s chosen by papa ;
And one, perhaps, she never saw—
A lover she herself selects,
With fewer wrinkles and defects.
And all this passes without strife
To incommode domestic life.

It may indeed seem curious,
But men are not penurious—
For oft a husband’s known to lend
A willing wife unto a friend⁽²⁶⁾ ;
And cases are not very rare
When friends have made consent to share
Domestic treasures, from which flow
Our greatest happiness below.

But few the married ladies here
Without *servente cavalier*—
And faith I can with truth assure,
The post is no great sinecure.
The dames are mostly so capricious—
One moment sad, and then facetious—
You don't, to use a quaint reply,
“ Know well which end to take them by.”

The *cicisbeo*'s forced to bear
The freaks and fancies of his fair—
Attend upon her beck and call—
A “ fetch and carry ” animal
Has scarcely a more restless life,
Than he who serves his neighbour's wife.
Some people say the thing's platonic—
Hum—hum—indeed—to be laconic
In my remarks—observe—I know
One single case in which it's so—
But then, the lady is four score—
The gentleman, a trifle more.

LETTER VII.

Messina, 1835.

MESSINA rises from the sea
In most imposing majesty ;
And from no other point of view,
Is half so picturesque and true.
Its splendid quay and harbour lie
Then as a map, before your eye :
And stately dwellings on the shore ;
Extending for a mile or more.
Then over these are seen to rise,
Tow'rs, churches, domes, and monast'ries.
Behind the town, a sea of rocks,
And craggy mountains' pointed tops ;
All undulating in their form,
Like mighty billows in a storm.
Then turn to where old Scylla laves
On fair Italia's coast its waves,

And there, alike extending rise,
Calabria's mountains, to the skies :
Each tow'ring up in solid might,
Like giants marshalling for fight.
Perhaps no spot has greater claim
To modern charms or ancient fame.

On earth, there's naught so odd—uncommon
As man (except it be a woman.)
And then he's so devoid of sense—
Puffed up with self and consequence—
So wayward—stubborn—hard to guide—
So full of vanity and pride :
And fancies nature's wisest measures
Form'd only for *his use* and *pleasures*.
Now granting him, for argument,
The first, in all its full extent—⁽²⁷⁾
(And yet in spite of all that's said
I have some doubts upon this head.)
I cannot think that heaven's will
Design'd man for his sport to kill :
Or, in proportion he should gain
Delight, as he inflicts a pain.
But now, the more he can destroy
The greater his content and joy.
How much more pleasing to contend
His place is rather to *defend*—

'Twould grace his nature better far,
Than all his skill God's works to mar.
I've thought on't much and seriously ;
But never could a motive see,
Why nature, that on earth—in air—
Forms all her works with so much care,
Should but such perfect things create,
For sporting men to mutilate.
Then man's so full of predilections,
Such odd, and such strange contradictions.
He follows after in the track
Of ev'ry thing that turns its back ;
And runs with all his strength and limb,
From ev'ry thing that follows him.

Now these, and some such meditations,
Form'd all this morning's contemplations ;
Returning from a ramble down
The mountains, just behind the town :
Occasioned by a novel snare
For catching birds, I witness'd there.

A boy at this sport never fails,
Yet puts no "*salt upon their tails.*"
And as to me, the custom's new,
Perhaps it may be so to you.
They tame an owl, which acts you'll see
The first part in this tragedy :

And those that are well educated,
Are here most highly estimated.
This owl is taken to a thicket,
And placed upon a little wicket,
Near which, unto projecting bushes
Are set a line of bird-limed rushes.
The sportsmen then retire, and leave
The rest their agent to achieve.
The owl, instructed for the game,
Hops from his perch, then back again :
And all the little feather'd race
Seem fascinated to the place ;
And soon are fetter'd in the snare
That artifice has planted there.
Alone, by this strange agent's power,
They oft catch fifty in an hour.

There's nothing sets the mind a craving
For foreign tours, like an engraving.
There, all the places smiling lie,
In sun and shade before the eye—
Like England's history, or France,
Told in a novel or romance :
The style is pleasing, flowing, new—
Very attractive, but not true—
The facts distorted, to avail
Some hidden purpose of the tale.

It's thus those pretty views one sees
In "*Keepsakes*" and "*Remember mes,*"
Are just as like another place,
As those they are design'd to trace.
Trees, woods, and rocks, inserted where
The real scene is dull and bare.
'Tis true, this is a striking feature,
But then it does not picture nature :
And hence come that regret and marvel
We oft experience when we travel.
Our sketching friends have places shown,
That either from the globe have flown ;
Or, danc'd but in their minds and eyes,
Our own to tease and tantalize.

In short, if you for fibs would look,
Turn o'er some female traveller's book,
Or views, or drawings, or what not—
(All ta'en of course, upon the spot)
But which are finish'd up so high,
In bushes, trees, and clouds, and sky,
As quite to hide the true intent
Of what they're meant to represent.

While I was staying at Messina,
As at some places I'd not been, a
Journey I thought to Syracuse
Might both instruct me and amuse.

Of Etna and Catania too,
I might in that case write to you—
And if I could find breath, and time
Tormino's rugged steeps to clime :
I should at least have food much better
Than ordinary, for a letter.

Anticipation paints more bright
Than honest truth e'er brings to light ;
And here, the *swans* I'd put on lakes,
Turn'd ev'ry one to *ducks and drakes*.

In no one spot that I can name,
So noted and renown'd by fame ;
Is there so little left to see,
Of int'rest and antiquity.
The spacious harbour's ample range
Has undergone but little change—
There, where the old Athenian fleet
Got so completely thrash'd and beat,
By warlike Syracusan men—
Most famous fighting fellows then.
The present race, I ought to mention,
Have quite forgot the old invention—
We may, for aught I know here say 'tis
Long lost, with those of Archimedes.

We read of stories very specious,
About the ear of Dionysius :

They 're truly good ones, tho' not new ;
And but one fault—they are not true :
At least, if he could pris'ners hear,
By means of this huge granite ear ;
We moderns cannot have repute
For organs that are so acute.
The echo of this place profound,
But adds confusion to the sound.

This cave, and all the neighb'ring ones,
Perhaps were quarries, where the stones
Were dug, and taken for the use
Of purposes, in Syracuse :
And afterwards, they might have been,
By some dread tyrant, made the scene
Of cruelty, in various ways ;
For many monsters, in those days,
Were most ingenious in their skill
Of adding woe to human ill.
At present, I but wish to doubt
If any person can make out,
From what remains now to be seen,
How possibly it could have been
Constructed, just in that same way,
That ancient authors please to say.
Most surely not—'tis but one more
Of those good fables from the store

Of olden times ; and which but few,
When search'd by reason, prove quite true.

Alas ! how oft I 'm doom'd to see,
Plain, unadorn'd reality,
Turn goddesses to dirty wretches,
And give the lie to fancy's sketches !
My long and nourish'd fairy dream,
Of Arethusa's bubbling stream,
Turns out at last, a pool for those,
Who daily wash there dirty clothes*.
No nymph is seen to sport and lave
Her limbs upon the buoyant wave—
No Naiad on its bosom floats,
But those in flannel petticoats ;
Tuck'd up—it made me blush to see,
Some inches far above the knee.
And then so vulgar—I was vex'd,
And wish'd them ev'ry one unsex'd,
And turn'd to something far more common,
Than to the species of lov'd woman.
A more disgusting group of creatures,
With human forms and human features—
Or more unlike those deities,
Old Authors place before our eyes,

* The fountain of Arethusa is now the public washing place of the town.

Have never yet, in any time,
That I can recollect, met mine.
Besides, no author ever notes
Nymphs wearing flannel petticoats.
They patronise light flowing dresses—
Transparent gauze in graceful tresses ;
Which is the best that can be worn,
To show a goddess lady's form.

I've often thought those blooming lasses
That live in Phœbus's Parnassus,
Employ'd much better undertakers
Of dress, than modern mantuanmakers.
If one of them should e'er remove
To Bond Street, from the courts above,
All female artistes will be undone,
That follow now that trade in London.

If I must nothing but what's true say
About the spring of Arethusa—
The veil is dropt—I now shall cease
To think this fountain comes from Greece ⁽²⁸⁾
So many leagues beneath the sea,
And rises here again, to be
A place (oh, profanation shocking !)
To wash a dirty shirt or stocking.

Vesuvius would only cut
A sorry figure, if 'twere put
Against Mount Etna's snow-clad top—
Mysterious nature's chemist shop.
She here compounds her various gasses,
Her lava, steam, and fiery masses ;
And sends them thund'ring up on high,
A mile or two towards the sky ;
Or pouring down upon the plain,
A glowing stream of liquid flame.
It grieved me much I could not go
Upon the top for frost and snow ;
I should have liked a hasty peep
Straight down that formidable steep,
'To see if one could there make out
Something of what she was about ;
For very little do we know
Of what is going on below
In nature's fearful lab'ratory—
Perhaps some power preparatory
To that which Etna's mania
Once burst upon Catania ;
A city that supplied the wants
Of thirty thousand habitants,
Which, phoenix-like, has risen once more
'To grace the bright Ionian shore.

We often read, in days of yore
The people went down to explore—
Some for their pleasure, or their wives,
And some to vary their dull lives—
These fiery paths, that lead you right
To Pluto's awful shades of night.
I hope the roads are better there,
Than we have in the open air ⁽²⁹⁾ ;
Perhaps then mules had surer feet
Than those dull things with which I meet—
The last two days my stumbling beast
Has kiss'd the ground five times at least ;
But if Sicilian tracks we travel,
At such mishaps we must not marvel.
Perhaps King Pluto's been advised
To have his roads macadamized—
I wish King Ferdinand would be
As kind and good in Sicily.
Mister Macadam need not fear
Of finding jobs if he'd come here.
I wish his steps were southward bending,
For *all* Italian *ways* want mending.

Who knows but that great cavity,
At such a distance that I see,
May happen just to be the same
So sung and talk'd about by fame ;

That Pluto, at the very time
He ran away with Proserpine,
Commanded, without more delay,
To open unto them a way ;
When quickly in the trembling ground
Appear'd this dark abyss profound ;
And soon they vanish'd from the sight,
Into the realms of endless night.

It makes one shudder at this hour
To think—if men had now that power—
One cannot possibly foresee
The evil such a thing might be.
Young ladies then would never dare
To venture in the open air,
Without being subject ev'ry day
To be caught up and ta'en away ;
And carried into earth and air,
Or water, or I know not where,
By some seducer on the watch,
A harmless innocent to catch ;
And who would tell, his prize to win,
The earth to ope and take them in.
Teaz'd we should then be all our lives,
In guarding daughters and our wives.

The distant crater I look on
Perhaps may be the very one

That Orpheus once, for aught I know,
Went down so many years ago,
Defying danger, toil, and strife,
To seek in hell his dear lost wife.
Few husbands now you'd find, I warrant,
Would go so far on such an errand—
But that the story is all true,
Must be quite evident to you ;
Because two witnesses forsooth
Bear testimony of the truth—
Virgil and Ovid—both I quote—
Men of veracity and note ;
And who I'll any one defy
To prove have ever told a lie.
Oh, no !—these poets, long since gone,
You always may depend upon.

I've ask'd the man who acts as guide,
And now is standing by my side,
If ever in his life he's seen
Or man, or woman enter in.
He says the path's now never trod,
That people go another road :
And he asserts, nor can I doubt,
That naught but flames and smoke come out.
Our modern wives respect their vow,
And never leave their husbands now ;

Or, if for change they ever roam,
They find a lover nearer home.

Oh, that I could bound o'er the snow,
And to that far-off crater go !
Who knows but I might get a sight
Of that condemn'd unhappy wight,
Old Sisyphus, who, to atone
For errors, rolls up hill a stone.
Poor man, how he must pant and sob,
In working at so long a job—
Why he's been at it, and not ceas'd,
Three or four thousand years at least.
About his health I'd like to ask,
And offer him my pocket flask ;
Some Cognac in such a mood,
Would do the poor old soul some good ;
And give him strength, if Pluto's bent
On his eternal punishment.

If I could only reach the track,
I'd gain an entrance in a crack ;
And pass the gate, for in my pocket,
I have the means that will unlock it—
Some sandwiches of beef and ham,
With which I'd hungry Cerb'rus cram—
His stomach full, he'd fall asleep,
And I could by the monster creep,

And see such sights in hell, as ne'er
Saw living mortal, that's quite clear.

And then to think upon the treat,
If I could only Virgil meet—
And by-the-bye, 'tween you and me,
He's just the man I'd like to see,
To ask him if he'd kindly grant me
Some information about Dante,—
Or rather those that Dante mentions ;
For all my studies and inventions
Have never clear'd my doubting quite,
Or set me, on some subjects, right.
Now, Virgil well must know his mind,
Because, by Dante's works we find
They walk'd together, in a season,
Through all the great infernal region ;
And many secrets must no doubt
In such a journey have come out.
Now all these puzzles I might know,
But for this deep and pathless snow.

I'm vex'd to think what I have lost
By this severe continued frost ;
And quite provok'd beyond all measure,
Whene'er I contemplate the pleasure
That must have follow'd the relation
Connected with my observation :

My work would then have been so priz'd,
I should have been immortaliz'd :
In ev'ry paper there would be
Extracts of "*Rhymes from Italy.*"
Among the wits there had been quite
A struggle who the most should write,
And who the highest trophy raise,
Or, who my book the most could praise.
In short, in ev'ry page they'd find
Some proof of a poetic mind :
Such pretty things would have been said,
The very thought on't turns my head.
Now, if I chance to print my work,
Depend upon't they'll whip me for't ;
They'll call it dull and common-place,
And say, in no one page they trace
A single image that is true,
Or one adventure that is new—
And that they're weary of perusing
What's neither useful, nor amusing—
And that the press, from time to time,
Produces just such trash as mine ;
And which can only be of use
To line a trunk, or singe a goose—
And Sisyphus has but a play-game,
Compar'd with drudgeries that they name ;
In poring over every minute
What has so little int'rest in it :

It puts me in a perfect fret,
To think the whipping I shall get—
Depend upon 't my back they'll tickle
With that long rod they've got in pickle.
The thought of a Reviewer's switch
Is sure to make my shoulders itch;
So let me leave this subject dread,
And hie me in good time to bed;
Where I may hope at least to dream
Upon a less terrific theme.

Kings often war without a cause,
Or but to gain the world's applause:
Or for a place, perhaps worth not
One half the powder and the shot
That it has cost, to gain a stand
On some bare rock, or barren sand;
And *that* at last, is but made good
By waste of wealth and human blood.
How oft have pride and stubbornness
Plung'd nations into deep distress?—
Wars, undertaken for a name,
And prosecuted without fame—
Unless that fame's made out to be
Poor suffering humanity—
The naked orphan's groans and cries,
Or wretched widow's tears and sighs.

And let these wars end as they may,
The subjects do the *piper pay* ;
And tax on tax must still be laid,
Till no more taxes can be paid ;
And imposts are at last combin'd,
Destructive to the health and mind ;
And myriads yet in embryo may
Lament the inauspicious day,
When chance plac'd on a throne, to rule,
A bigot, or a headstrong fool.
The very plain and simple plan
Of ruling, seems quite lost to man—
Or chang'd its clear straight-forward course,
For one of not so pure a source :
And human laws are never free
From quicksands, shoals, and trickery ;
Anomalies and contradictions,
Or whimsey strange, and predilections :
There's hardly any thing you see
That's just what it pretends to be.
Our real track we often smother,
And feign we're going by another :
For truth you'd think had fled the earth
Within a short time of her birth ;
And men and states (alas ! the shame)
Pursue a path they dread to name ;
Gain ends by ways you may detect
As neither honest, nor direct :

Before the world, walk to the right—
Turn to the left when out of sight.
This judgment may appear quite new,
But not, on that account, less true.

“Twould be most happy for mankind,
If rulers could a method find
Of gaining succours for the state,
And not hold out a tempting bait
To vice, to folly, and to sin,
For silly men to tumble in.
Whoever loves his children’s lives,
For playthings should not give them knives ⁽³⁰⁾.

Man’s often tempted to a snare,
And punish’d then for going there :
And hence how plain it’s understood,
They favour evil with the good.
Like many people gone before,
They both the principles adore ⁽³¹⁾ :
The right hand *Heav’n* ; and, to be civil,
They with the left one serve the *devil*.
And in no country is this shown
More plain and clear than in our own.
Our government allows temptation
To drunkenness, past calculation ;
And when with gin your noddle rocks,
They set you gently in the stocks :

They tempt the poor man off his feet,
And then provide him with a seat.
Now this is done, and yet they know
The state machine can never go
Lumbering on, unless they get
The entire int'rest of the debt ;
And then the tax this liquor pays,
Assists the crippled "*means and ways*."
Hence, such splendid shops you view in
London, where they sell *blue ruin**.

In Sicily they don't drink gin,
So here they 're tempted on to sin,
And by a way as sure to send
Poor sinners to a wicked end.
The gentleman "*that wears the black*,"
Ne'er show'd to man a surer track
To reach at last his fiery seas,
Than when he set up lotteries⁽³²⁾.
And here they have such pests become,
You purchase with the smallest sum.
Can any system be more wicked,
When only one grain† buys a ticket ?
And so the low, as well as great—
Nay even beggars speculate :

* A cant name for gin.

† A grain is rather less than a halfpenny.

And poverty and deep offences
Are the natural consequences.
Most of the crimes here talk'd about,
Are to this source alone traced out.
One week they're buying chances, seen
The next, upon the guillotine (³³).

And now, I think, my dearest friend,
It's almost time that I should end
This rhyming journal—for I doubt
If I have more to rhyme about.
No former places where I've been,
Or other objects that I've seen,
Have offer'd any thing inviting,
Or suited to my style of writing.
If I could reach heroic verse,
I then might easily rehearse
Deeds, that are suited to such lays,
Of noted men in former days;
Who said and did such things, as ne'er
Men now can do, that I'll declare:
Nor did they then, if we could tell
The very bottom of truth's well;
But olden writers of the south
Planted such brambles round its mouth,
That far from even peeping in,
One scarcely can approach the brim.

The German Niebuhr, we know⁽³⁴⁾,
Made one bold push, not long ago,
And to each thinking man's surprise—
At risk of both his clothes and eyes—
To our great gain, and his renown,
He scrambled more than half way down.
Who knows, but some inquirer yet
May one day to the bottom get ?
Our studies, then, would be a measure
Of truly enviable pleasure.
What joy, to search out wisdom's height,
Convinc'd the road you're going's right !

I see but little use to dwell
On things that all the road-books tell—
Or what you'll find in travels, guides,
In prints and other things besides.
I wish, for your sake, that this letter
And those before it had been better.
I have not fail'd for want of will,
But honestly for want of skill :
And recollect, before you venture
My humble, ambling nag to censure,
'Twas you that press'd on this attack,
And lifted me upon his back.
'Tis true he has not, in one sense,
Occasion'd inconvenience ;

But been as docile and as mild
As any good obedient child ;
And let me put the saddle on
Whené'er I wish'd to jog along ;
And often I have had him led
Out, when he'd better been in bed ⁽³⁵⁾.
Now this I hope you'll not refuse
To think a very good excuse
For many faults that you'll find lurk
In various pages of my work.

And now, as I've no more to tell,
I'll take my leave, and say farewell ;
With wishing you, my friend, no less
Than ev'ry earthly happiness—
Content, prosperity, and wealth,
With length of days in peace and health ;
And ev'ry true and friendly greeting,
Until our next gay, social meeting.

NOTES.

NOTES.

Page 3.

(¹) “ *Sweet Tasso’s strains—they’re lost and gone.*”

“ IN Venice the Gondoliers know by heart long passages from Ariosto and Tasso, and often chant them with a peculiar melody. But this talent seems at present on the decline [it has now entirely ceased];—it suits perfectly well with an idle solitary mariner, lying at length in his vessel, at rest, on one of these canals, waiting for his company, or for a fare; the tiresomeness of which situation is somewhat alleviated by the songs and poetical stories he has in memory. He often raises his voice as loud as he can, which extends itself to a vast distance over the tranquil mirror: and as all is still around, he is, as it were, in a solitude in the midst of a large and populous town. Here is no rattling of carriages, no noise of foot passengers; a silent gondola glides now and then by him, of which the splashing of the oars is scarcely to be heard.

“ At a distance, he hears another, perhaps utterly unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers; he becomes the responsive echo to the former, and exerts himself to be heard, as he had heard the other. By a tacit conversation, they alternate verse for verse; though the song should be the

whole night through, they entertain themselves without fatigue. The hearers, who are passing between the two, take part in the amusement. This vocal performance sounds best at a great distance, and is then inexpressibly charming, as it only fulfils its design in the sentiment of remoteness. It is plaintive, but not dismal in its sound; and at times, it is scarcely possible to refrain from tears."—*Curiosities of Literature*.

Page 3.

(2) "*Of toiling man, a brother meeting.*"

In the narrow canals, before a Gondolier turns a corner—many of which are very abrupt—he always cries out, "Bada," to give notice of his approach to any other Gondolier, that may be coming in an opposite direction. Many of these canals are most gloomy, suspicious-looking places; and I do not wonder that novelists have so frequently laid the scenes of mystery there. I believe I am correct in stating, that you may go to every house in Venice, either by land, or by water—but by a gondola, you can frequently reach a spot in five minutes, that would take you more than an hour to thread out by the narrow lanes.

Page 6.

(3) "*Old Denner's pencil the true link tells.*"

"Balthasar Denner's fame rose very high on his exhibiting the head of an old woman, in which the grain of the skin, the hairs, the down, and the glassy humour of the eyes, were represented with the most exact minuteness; but it gained him more applause than custom, for a man could not execute many works who employed so much time upon the finishing of one. The Emperor Charles VI. gave him six hundred ducats for this picture, and the like sum for the portrait of an old man to match it. Denner finished the portraits of himself, his wife, and children, with such circumstantial detail, that the pores of the skin were visible. Denner died at Hamburg in 1747."—PILKINGTON'S *History of Painters*.

Page 7.

(4) "*A larger work upon this theme.*"

A noble Venetian lady, not long ago, published an amusing work, in two volumes, on the festivals of Venice; and a good description of the ancient pageants may be found in *Del Costume Veneziano*, by Mutinelle.

Page 11.

(5) "*Improve their children's innocence.*"

I know some persons think this of little importance, and talk much about mock-modesty and false-delicacy, when the impropriety of leading young females into statue galleries is mentioned. Well, as they please—but I presume no husband, or father of daughters, would like their families to contemplate some objects I could mention, which are in the rooms that are shown in the Doge's palace—of most exquisite workmanship, I grant—but this rather increases, than diminishes the impropriety I complain of.

Page 19.

(6) "*What adds unto men's happiness.*"

"La liberté, vous l'avouerez avec moi, est le premier bonheur, la seule gloire de l'ordre social; l'histoire n'est décorée que par les vertus des peuples libres; les seuls noms qui retentissent de siècle en siècle à toutes les âmes généreuses ce sont les noms de ceux qui ont aimé la liberté! nous avons en nous-mêmes une conscience pour la liberté comme pour la morale; aucun homme n'ose avouer qu'il veut la servitude, aucun homme n'en peut être accusé sans rougir; et les cœurs les plus froids, si leur vie n'a point été souillée, tressaillent encore lorsqu'ils voient en Angleterre les touchans exemples du respect des lois pour l'homme, et des hommes pour la loi."—*Madame la Baronne de Staël.*

Page 25.

(7) "*Or whether it be Whig or Tory.*"

Many people appear to think that the violent party spirit now prevalent is that which is chiefly to be weighed and regarded; for that Whig and Conservative are all in all. The paramount importance will, however, be found to rest (independently of any particular set of political agents) on that series of public measures which is ardently contemplated by the British nation; those changes being only the inevitable effects of a decided spirit of improvement, by which the age we live in is happily distinguished.

Page 25.

(8) "*Or mark a limit for the mind.*"

" Yet let us ponder boldly—'tis a base
 Abandonment of reason to resign
 Our right of thought—our last and only place
 Of refuge, this, at least, shall still be mine:
 Though from our birth the faculty divine
 Is chain'd and tortured—cabin'd, cribb'd, confined,
 And bred in darkness, lest the truth should shine
 Too brightly on the unprepared mind,
 The beam pours in, for time and skill will couch the blind."

LORD BYRON.

Page 27.

(9) "*Societies and clubs are spread.*"

During the last five-and-twenty years, a great number of clubs have been established in London and elsewhere. The inducement to young men to become members is considerable, both with a view to economy, and to the comfortable, or rather the splendid accommodations of the club-houses. One of the ill consequences which attend this plan of life is, that the men are

withdrawn more than they were accustomed to be from social intercourse with the respectable and accomplished portion of the female sex, and thus *their* influence, so beneficial to society, is in a measure suspended.

Page 27.

(10) "*Heaven will, I hope, admit th' excuse.*"

"But if it is strange, that one man has been immortalized as a god, and another put to death as a felon, for actions which have the same motive and the same tendency, merely because they were circumstantially different; it is yet more strange, that this difference has always been such as increases the absurdity; and that the action which exposes a man to infamy and death, wants only greater aggravation of guilt, and more extensive and pernicious effects, to render him the object of veneration and applause."—*Doctor Hawkesworth.*

Page 45.

(11) "*By the Academy in London.*"

I do not mean to state that the Royal Academy of Music has not produced some very clever instrumental performers; but I maintain it *has not, or ever will*, educate any superior to the hundred professors I could mention, who studied their art before that plausible institution was established. Why employ steam, when a less expensive agent will produce all the effects wanted? The advocates of this academy say, the stimulus it occasions is highly beneficial.—Granted;—but in the present advanced state of society, there is quite rivalry enough, without an institution of this kind; and I entirely fail in my judgment, if composers can be manufactured in schools. The rules of composition are known to thousands; but without the assistance of nature, all the rules are in vain. My reading and experience tell me, the fetters of systems are frequently injurious to the flight of genius. Shakspeare was much less learned than Ben Jonson; and I have never been able to discover that Burns, with all Doctor Black-

lock's instructions, wrote at all better than when he followed his father's plough-tail. It is an undeniable fact, that the Royal Academy at Somerset House has never sent a talented young painter abroad to study, who has returned the least benefited. George Barker painted the Woodman, and was then sent to Italy for improvement:—what did he ever produce afterwards equal to that picture?

It is my opinion, that some of the most beautiful things of Mozart and Beethoven, are to be found in their earliest works. But the greatest evil to be apprehended from the Royal Academy of Music is, the immense increase of professors; and, truth to say, that is needless:—who is there, that is not tired and weary of the everlasting benefit-concerts in London—very often two, and even three, in a day—and which, by the way, is only a genteel method of begging; for what possible claim can persons have to a *benefit*-concert, who are always paid for their lessons and services?—why, none that I could ever discover. It would require a pamphlet to contain all I could say on this subject—a few words more, and I have done. We are perpetually hearing of persons who return from India with a large fortune, but seldom of those who are less successful;—and so with the pupils of the Royal Academy of Music—the failures are kept in the background. If it were not an invidious task, I could mention a great many—I'll just give one as a specimen. The son of most respectable parents, who are known to me, and who brought up the youth with the greatest care and attention, sent him to the Royal Academy, where he learnt enough of music and good conduct to enable him to fill the situation of a common sailor, and to assist in the band of an East India ship, in which servile situation he is at this moment.

Page 46.

(12) "*I mean our horrible street singing.*"

Both in Germany and in Italy I have heard persons singing to the company in coffee-houses, that were educated at different musical institutions in the latter country. The first time that I was at Venice, I recollect a female, who used to sing to her guitar, before the doors of the coffee-houses in the Piazza St. Mark, many of Rossini's most difficult songs, in a manner that would not have disgraced an artist of greater pretensions—but, in the south of Italy, I never heard any street singing that was not execrable.

Page 49.

(13) "*You'd better far give them another.*"

Far be it from me to say there never was a truly modest woman educated at the Royal Academy of Music. I only mean to imply, that it is *not a situation the best calculated to produce that desirable end*. Children ranged out in front of an orchestra, to assist in the concerted music, at the public performances given by the pupils of the Royal Academy, and which are always numerous patronised, must tend to injure that interesting diffidence, and retiring modesty, which is so *much*, and so *justly* admired in an English female. I certainly know several instances where this has not been the case; and I could mention pupils of that institution who are now filling the duties of wives and mothers, in the most exemplary manner.

Page 50.

(14) "*Il Furioso San Domingo.*"

"*Il Furioso nell' Isola di S. Domingo.*" An opera by Donizetti, which is performed frequently in Italy, but which has never been done in London.

Page 53.

(15) "*Retrace it back to Gothic night.*"

Had Rome never been ravaged by barbarian armies,—had she proceeded, without interruption, in the natural current of civilization, it is evident, that, in process of time, the Romans would have practised the all-important art of printing; and that too, long before the period of its discovery in Germany. One is led to this opinion by the fact that types were used in ancient Italy, to stamp on the backs of sheep the initials of the owner's name; and bricks are frequently found in Rome with the maker's stamp. I might likewise notice the loaves of bread that have been discovered at Pompeii, with the initials of a name stamped on them. This was the very threshold of printing—one step more, and they must have discovered the art. Then again, since Cicero has left us in his works the plan of a perfect government, resembling what our own has become; now that the Reform Bill has secured to the British people their legitimate influence in the state, we must conclude that Rome, if she had not been conquered, would have gradually arrived at a well reasoned form of government, something like that with which our nation is at present favoured.

Page 54.

(16) "*Has saved so many folks from hell.*"

Credulity itself would scarcely credit the immense quantities of trash and trumpery that are exhibited in the churches in catholic countries, as genuine, saintly, and efficacious relics; and I could add to the list already given many others equally preposterous; among which, the flea that supped on the fair skin of Eve, is, perhaps, one of the most ridiculous. Really, one hardly knows whether to smile or to sigh at such egregious folly—to be amused by the tricks of the deceivers, or to lament the degraded state of the understandings of the deceived—at any rate, it proves that the "*schoolmaster*" has still much to

accomplish!—he has likewise a numerous, powerful, and interested host of gentlemen in black gowns and skull-caps to conquer, before he can make much progress in this country—but let him persevere, and he must in the end prove victorious. Bigotry holds little influence over cultivated minds. I never mentioned the subject of these relics to an educated Catholic that did not laugh at the antiquated mummeries. It is only the very lowest and uninformed part of the population who now swallow these degrading cheats—instruct them, and the priests may light their fires with the relics, for they will be of no further use.

The witty author of the “Two Hundred and Nine Days on the Continent,” speaking of the aforesaid flea, which first brought the beautiful mother of us all acquainted with pain, says, “I was told that at Cologne they have the first animal that drew blood, and thus broke the general peace, *viz.* the flea that bit Eve the night after her fall, and to her great dismay; for it is said to be nearly as large as a well-grown prawn. The unusual size of the creature is in favour of the truth of the story, and of the antediluvian origin of the insect, for there were giants in those days, and men reached a prodigious age; but since the deluge, both ourselves and our fleas are a stunted, short-lived, squishy race.”

This shrewd wanderer on the continent favours the antediluvian origin of the glistening insect, so profitably preserved by the priests at Cologne; but he has not ventured to describe the relic as a *fossil flea*; and probably for this reason, that being himself among those cultivated persons who read the works of the philosophic Cuvier, he was well aware that at the remote period when fossils were formed (a property which the globe has since lost), man had never yet existed; no, nor any of his order of creatures, from the orang to the marmoset.

Page 58

(17) “*The power and love of money at Rome.*”

If I had visited Palermo before this description had been written, I certainly should have laid the scene there, rather than

at Rome; for although the Roman beggars are very finished professors in the art, they are infinitely inferior to the countless, importunate, disgusting beggars at Palermo.

Page 59.

(18) "*Among the lower ranks at Rome.*"

Before the reader concludes that this picture is too highly coloured, he is requested to inspect the markets at Rome, frequented by the lower orders of the people, and see the disgusting-looking food that is exposed for sale; and which, of course, is intended to be eaten. When I was first informed that some of the poorer ranks had been known to eat cats, I confess I was not a little sceptical of the fact, and set about an inquiry, in a quarter of the city where I was most likely to gain information; when the first answer which I received, convinced me that I had not been deceived: "I gatti, perchè non sarebbero buoni per mangiare?"

Page 93.

(19) "*Has been to call a man disguster.*"

In Naples, last winter, "a disguster" was the designation used by the young ladies of high fashion, to distinguish a man who happened to have superior talents, or who wished to improve them by study and application.

Page 93.

(20) "*The women rule men's destinies.*"

"Chilly as the climate of the world is growing—artificial and systematic as it has become—and unwilling as we are to own the fact, there are few amongst us but who have had some feelings once strongly entwined around the soul, and who have felt how dear was their possession when existing, and how acute the pang which their severing cost. Fewer still were the labyrinths unclosed in which their affections lay folded, but in whose hearts the name of *woman* would be found, although the rough collision with the world may have partially effaced it."

Page 94.

(21) "*Into Calabria talk of going.*"

One is perpetually hearing of the ferocity of the Calabrians. I do not mean to deny that there have been many atrocious acts committed by some of the almost lawless inhabitants of the mountain districts—but I repeat, in plain prose, what I have stated in rhyme—I consider the thing greatly exaggerated. The world is very fond of talking about marvels—many of which will not stand the test of cool inquiry. I have all my life heard, that the Calabrians always go armed, and that the men plough the fields with a dagger in their girdles, and a musket on each shoulder; but I never heard how they accomplished their work, thus encumbered—that, I believe, would not be so easy a thing to resolve. I certainly did meet with an unusual number of men carrying fire-arms; but, on inquiry, I found they were all collectors of small taxes, and servants of the state. If the deposition of the brigand who shot Mr. and Mrs. Hunt a few years ago be correct, that melancholy event was more owing to a momentary impulse of passion than premeditation. The true version of the story is, when the travellers were stopped by the band of robbers, the chief attempted to take a gold chain from the lady's neck: when Mr. Hunt, under an idea the brigand was taking a liberty with her person, struck him, which was the cause of the fatal catastrophe.

Page 98.

(22) "*Set all your vain threats at defiance.*"

A few days ago an old gentleman had his pocket picked of a handkerchief by a young rascal, who, finding the unfortunate sufferer was too infirm to follow him, merely crossed the street, held it up in triumph, and laughed; in which laugh all the passengers, as if it had been a good joke, joined him.

Page 99.

(23) "*I used to think a carnival.*"

I have taken the liberty of making a little transposition here. The characters I have mentioned were exhibited in the carnival of the year 1833. The last, in 1835, did not produce a single attempt at practical wit that deserves to be noticed—it was, of all the carnivals I ever witnessed, the most stupid and dull.

Page 103.

(24) "*Either to stop or go't away.*"

"At Naples, the insolence of tyranny respecting passports is at its highest; it requires three days and two piastres to arrange this troublesome business; and they do not content themselves with bedevilling the old one, as elsewhere; but a king, who is kept on the throne by foreign arms, of which he cannot pay the hire, has the audacious impudence to require that a new and separate passport should be taken out from his own wretched minister."—*Hogg's Journal of a Traveller.*

Page 115.

(25) "*If vine-clad mountains, fruitful vales.*"

The plain between Palermo and the mountains is beyond description fruitful. In many parts the land produces three crops at the same time—olive trees, and, under them, grapes and wheat.

Page 131.

(26) "*A willing wife unto a friend.*"

"I think the female sex in Sicily, with regard both to the manners and morals, very superior to the men, to whom indeed, the greatest part of their vices are attributable; for as soon as one sex disregards virtue, the other will rarely be at the pains to keep it. Much mischief also is deducible from the faulty education of their girls within the gloomy unsocial cloisters of a convent, from the restraints of which, they rush at once into a deceitful world,

without the guidance of example or experience, with few accomplishments, either useful or ornamental, but with minds imbued in all the frivolities of superstition, eager only to make themselves compensation by a surfeit of pleasure for that time which they have spent without any enjoyment at all. Intellectual acquirements indeed are considered quite superfluous, when the only end of a woman's being is to dispose of herself in marriage; and as marriage is made a matter of traffic, all ideas of mutual attachment, all that refinement which dignifies the institution, is totally unknown. A young lady of high rank in Palermo was offered to my friend with less ceremony than a horse, or a parcel of ground would be submitted to a person desirous to purchase."—*Rev. T. S. Hughes's Travels in Sicily and Greece.*

Page 134.

(27) "*The first, in all its full extent.*"

What man's divine Maker intended his food to be, is now a difficult question to determine. The general belief is, that every thing being made for his use, he may freely partake of all. Now this would be very delightful, if experience did not convince us that half the evils we have to endure are entirely owing to the depravity of our appetites. I am very willing to admit that there is great pleasure in good eating and drinking; and also, if there was a planet where a man could indulge with impunity, I should like to go and live there; but as the probabilities are, even with all our astounding improvements in travelling, that we shall never accomplish so long a journey, let us endeavour to improve our condition by the aid of reason. If the anatomy of man were to decide the question, it would be brought into a much narrower compass; because, arguing from analogy, we see all the creatures around us, in a wild state living on a specific food. Man, almost daily, takes into his stomach a part of the produce of the four quarters of the globe. That he is subject to more diseases than animals in a state of nature, is unquestionable; and which, I think,

he might diminish, with the assistance of reflection and experience. In this matter the instinct of animals appears more valuable than the boasted reason of man; for although he endeavours to balance the mischief which his feelings too plainly tell him he is daily committing, by the use of rhubarb, soda, ginger, and a hundred things besides, he cannot shut his eyes to the fact, that creatures which live on their natural food enjoy better health, without the assistance of physic. Among the various inconveniences we experience, in consequence of having left our proper food, perhaps none are more evident than the diseases of our teeth. It is an allowed fact, that there never was a monkey or a baboon, or any of the species ever taken in a wild state, at any age (and they have been caught at all ages) that ever had a decayed tooth. Now take a hundred of the human species that have passed the middle period of life, and how many of them can say they never had a diseased tooth?—perhaps not ten out of the hundred!

It is my opinion, that if man could regain a knowledge of his proper food, and be induced to adopt it, he would be, both morally and physically, improved by the change; and many strong facts might be brought to prove, that all-bountiful Nature never neglects her works, but corrects the evils that have been contracted by straying from her simple paths, in those that are wise enough to return to them. Take one proof, out of the many I could quote in corroboration of this assertion. The immense droves of wild horses that bound over the extensive plains in South America, are noted for possessing more sagacity, vigour, and strength, than horses under the dominion of man; independently of which, they are nearly all of one size and colour—now horses are animals which were unknown in South America, before the Spaniards conquered that country; and we are convinced these droves of spirited creatures are the produce of the horses which escaped from the Spanish armies; and, having regained their liberty and natural food, have recovered their original colour and strength; for one cannot for a moment suppose, that every horse that broke

loose from the armies was of one height, and of a dark brown colour, with a black flowing mane and tail; certainly not—and the fact clearly proves what I have stated above.

Men of reflection have, in all ages, been convinced of the baneful effects of unnatural stimulating food, and one might fill a volume with quotations to that effect. Perhaps no one has given a more powerful and correct picture of the melancholy consequences than Pope, in his “Essay on Man”—third epistle, fourth section—in the former part of which, he describes man in his primitive state of happiness, and concludes with these energetic lines—

“ Ah! how unlike the man of times to come!
Of half that live the butcher and the tomb;
Who, foe to nature, hears the gen’ral groan,
Murders their species, and betrays his own.
But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And ev’ry death its own avenger breeds;
The fury-passions from that blood began,
And turn’d on man a fiercer savage, Man.”

Among the various institutions in our country, which have been established for promoting the happiness of mankind, I lament there has never been one that has embraced this important subject; and although I do not think that human life could be much prolonged, yet I conceive it might be relieved of many of its evils, which is, perhaps, more desirable. We have from time to time several useful publications, under the titles of “Guides to Health and Longevity,” which are all beneficial, as they inculcate the advantages of temperance and exercise; but a society of *disinterested* scientific men, who would hold monthly meetings for the purpose of discussing this interesting subject, and publish their observations on food, water, and climate, would carry more weight with the public, than the writings of an individual, who, nine times out of ten, is induced to print more from a love of the money which the work is to produce, than the love of the welfare of his fellow men.

A person, whose attention has never been directed to the subject, would be astonished to hear how many millions of human beings there are on the globe who never eat animal food; and, even in the United Kingdoms, a large portion of the peasantry in Westmoreland and Cumberland, who are a particularly strong, active, healthy race of men, seldom touch meat but on a Sunday; and there are more still in Ireland, who never eat animal food, save at a wedding or a christening. Every day's experience tells us, the more simple our habits and food, the more robust our health. I know a district in Cumberland, containing 6000 inhabitants, which affords only a scanty employment for three medical men; and I also know a fashionable watering-place, of the same population, that maintains two physicians, twelve surgeons and apothecaries, and six druggists. This single fact speaks volumes in favour of an abstemious meat diet.

Page 141.

(28) “*To think this fountain comes from Greece.*”

Pliny says, that the garlands of conquerors and the dung of the victims at the Olympian games, when thrown into the Alpheus, reappeared at Syracuse, in the fountain of Arethusa. “*Quædam flumina odio maris ipsa subeunt vada, sicut Arethusa Fons Syracusanus, in quo redduntur jacta in Alpheum, qui per Olympiam fluvius Peloponnesiaco littori infunditur.*” *Nat. His. lib. 2.* “*Et illa miracula planè, Arethusam Syracusis finum redolere per Olympiam, verique simile quoniam Alpheus in eam insulam sub ima maria permeat.*” *Lib. 31.* This idea spread also in Peloponnesus itself, for the priests of the Goddess of Safety in Ægium in Achaia used to throw offerings from the altar into the sea, saying, “they sent them to Arethusa, in Sicily.” *Pausan. in Achaieis, 24, ii.*

Page 143.

(29) "*Than we have in the open air.*"

The only public roads in Sicily, are from Messina to Catania and Palermo; all the rest are merely mule tracks, and so bad and dangerous as to require no common share of fortitude and nerve to accomplish a journey by them. The state of the roads in Sicily has ever been a cause of great complaint, particularly among the inhabitants of the country districts; they have long paid a heavy tax towards them, and it is a usual saying among the farmers, "that had the money they have contributed for this purpose been honestly and properly applied, they might have had roads all over the island, paved with silver."

Page 151.

(30) "*For playthings should not give them knives.*"

"La société punit souvent les penchans que la société fait naître, ou que sa négligence fait germer dans les esprits; elle agit comme ces pères injustes qui châtent leurs enfans des défauts qu'ils leur ont eux-mêmes fait contracter."

Page 151.

(31) "*They both the principles adore.*"

History furnishes us with examples of nations which worshipped both good and evil deities. Those ancient tribes, having no revelation, *themselves* provided the doctrines and ceremonies of their religion. They reflected on what they saw around them; and as opportunities must sometimes have occurred of witnessing the sportive cruelty of the tiger and the lion in playing with the wild

goat, the antelope, or the argali, before the destruction of their victims, they came to the conclusion that in the universal power there must be a participator—a Demon of Unrighteousness. We have all observed the protracted torture of the mouse, to which the cat devotes that animal; but the tiger, when not impelled by hunger, will still manifest, by the flexible motion of his tail, the delight which he has in destruction.

Page 152.

(32) “*Than when he set up lotteries.*”

It is impossible to imagine a system more calculated to injure the morals of a people than the lotteries in Italy, as you may stake the very smallest sum. The chances of gain are very slight indeed—the purchaser chooses three numbers, on which he can win nothing, unless they come up consecutively—a very forlorn hope, where there are several thousand tickets to be drawn.

Page 153.

(33) “*The next upon the guillotine.*”

An acquaintance of mine, who has lived many years in Messina, assured me, that not long ago, an industrious butcher was persuaded to purchase some tickets in the lottery, all of which came up blanks. In a fit of despair, he was tempted to risk the whole of his little property, in hopes of repairing his first loss—but here again his expectations were disappointed. Hurried on by fury and madness, he committed a robbery on the highway—he was taken, tried, condemned, and suffered death by the guillotine—and all this passed in the course of a few weeks.

Page 154.

(34) “*The German Niebuhr we know.*”

“Niebuhr’s History of Rome,” a work of great research and merit, wherein the enlightened author has refuted many of the

popular stories that have been handed down from the earliest periods, until they are received as facts; but which modern inquiry is every day proving to be wholly fictitious.

Page 155.

(35) "*When he 'd better been in bed.*"

Many of these sketches were composed in diligences, when the roads were too rough to indulge in those "dog-slumbers" that occasionally beguile half an hour in a tedious dark night's journey; and many more, which I have lost, from being too faintly traced on the tablet of my mind to be written on the tablet in my pocket when day-light appeared.

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